VINDICATION

OF THE

REVISED LITURGY,

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL.

BY THE

REV. J. W. NEVIN, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
JAS. B. RODGERS, PRINTER, 52 & 54 NORTH SIXTH STREET.
1867.

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ELDERS' REQUEST.

DAYTON, December 1, 1866.

REV. J. W. NEVIN, D.D.

REV. AND DEAR BRO.:—

We, the undersigned, *Elders of the General Synod*, being impressed with the conviction, that the exhibition of the history, doctrines, and ruling spirit of the Revised Liturgy, presented in a tract entitled, "A History and Criticism of the Ritualistic Movement in the German Reformed Church, by Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger, D.D.," must be one-sided and unfair, and, therefore, calculated to do much harm in the Church; and desiring to have an expression of the views held by the other members of the Committee who prepared the Liturgy, would unite in earnestly requesting you to furnish us with a history of its preparation and a critical review of its merits, for publication.

Very respectfully yours,

A. B. Wingerd, Mercersburg	Classis.
D. S. Dieffenbacher, St. Paul's	"
J. Troxel, Westmoreland	"
John Zollinger, Illinois	"
Wm. A. Wilt, Zion's	"
T. J. Craig, Westmoreland	"
Geo. P. Wiestling, Lancaster	"
W. G. King, Clarion	"
N. D. Hauer, Maryland	"
D. C. Hammond, Maryland	"
Daniel Cort, Iowa	"
Jacob Bausman, Lancaster	"
D. B. Martin, Mercersburg	"
John Bowman, Mercersburg	"
Geo. Hill, East Susquehannah	"
Michael Brown, West Susquehanna	"
R. E. Addams, Lebanon	"
Samuel Zacharias, Zion's	"
D. Lupfer, Zion's	"
John W. Bachman, East Pennsylvania	"
John Meily, Lebanon	"

INTRODUCTION.

The *Request* prefixed to this pamphlet sufficiently explains its occasion and object; while it is of a character also not only to justify, but even to demand and require its appearance. It is most true, that Dr. Bomberger's tract is "one-sided and unfair, and therefore calculated to do much harm in the Church." It was brought out hastily, just before the meeting of the late General Synod at Dayton, to serve a party purpose, and as part of a plan to pre-occupy the members of that body (particularly in the West), with a prejudice against the Revised Liturgy, which, it was hoped, might be sufficient to overwhelm and crush it before it could have a chance of coming before the people. It was, in this respect, like a political campaign document, let off on the eve of an election for effect; and it is characterized throughout by the spirit of reckless misrepresentation we usually meet with, and expect to meet with, in publications of this sort. Its criticisms on the Liturgy itself do not amount to much. They are vague, indefinite, and loose; turning, for the most part, on the use of invidious terms of reproach, and appeals to popular prejudice. But this is only a small part of its offence. By far the greater part of the tract is devoted to another object altogether. Under the pretence of giving a history of the Liturgy, it seeks to make capital against it by trying to show that it is a grand fraud, which has been practised upon the Church by the Committee intrusted with the work of its preparation.

In this view, it is an atrocious libel throughout upon the character of the Committee, as well as an insult to the Church at large, in whose service they have been working for so many years. All this was brought out clearly enough in the Synod at Dayton; and the political bomb-shell went off there without much execution. But the matter deserves unquestionably a still more public exposure. The voice of so large a portion of our Eastern lay delegation in attendance at Dayton deserves to be heard. I proceed, therefore, to the task of vindicating the Liturgy from the wrong that is done to it in this tract, both historically and theologically. The personalities which this must involve, to a certain extent, I should have preferred having nothing to do with; but I do not see how they are to be avoided.

As just intimated, what I have to say will fall naturally into two general parts; a defence of the Liturgy, or say rather of the movement leading to it, historically considered; secondly, a defence of the Liturgy, considered in its actual theological character. For the second part, I will take the liberty of using an article I have written on this subject for the resuscitated *Mercersburg Review*.

PART I.

HISTORICAL VINDICATION OF THE NEW LITURGY.

Worship, in the use of prescribed forms, is not a new thing in the Reformed Church. Liturgies, of some sort, have had place within it from the beginning. They belonged to its church life in Europe, and they came over with the same church life to this country. At the same time, they were held to be a fair subject all along for change and improvement. No Liturgy was considered to be of perpetual force, even for the particular country or province in which it was used; much less for other countries. The liberty of primitive times here was practically asserted, as the proper liberty of the Protestant Church. The old Swiss Liturgies in this way changed. The old Liturgy of the Palatinate became antiquated, even in the Palatinate itself. There was a movement all along, in other words, towards the realization of something in worship, which it was felt had not been fully reached in existing forms. The grossly unliturgical tendencies of later times (Rationalistic in Germany, Methodistic in this country), belonged themselves to this movement. But they had no power to bring it to rest. They only served to urge it onward in its course, by deepening the sense of a want which they had no power to satisfy, and by causing it to be felt, that the true satisfaction for this want must be sought in some other way. Hence, among the "pious desires" of the Reformed Church in America, we find at work all along, very sensibly felt, the wish for a satisfactory Liturgy. The old Palatinate service was *not* satisfac-

tory; and none of the services brought over from Europe, during the last century, were satisfactory. At the same time, the deeper consciousness of the Church refused to settle into contentment with the modern innovation of totally free prayer. Such worship had, indeed, forced itself into use on all sides; but the true genius of the Church, at bottom, resented it as something foreign and strange; and its voice was still heard, though in more or less smothered accents, calling out for a Liturgy that might be worthy of the name.

It was in response to this call, that the *Mayer Liturgy*, as it is called, made its appearance in 1837; the respectable work of a truly respectable man. But, as all know, it failed to satisfy the Church. Full opportunity was given for the trial of it. Nobody thought of opposing any bar to its use. No popular prejudice lay in its way; no outside jealousy stood ready to shout *Ritualism* in its face. But still it found almost no favor. Ministers and people consented in allowing it to fall well-nigh dead from the press. Why? "Because," says Dr. Bomberger, "it was unhappily not constructed after the pattern of our older Liturgies," and was "too much of an accommodation to the spirit of the times." That is, it did not please the times, because it went too much *with* the times, and refused to go full against them, as was done soon after, Dr. B. tells us, by the reactionary movement which was led off by the publication of the *Anxious Bench* in 1842. What the Doctor says, moreover, of its unhappy variation from our older Liturgies, is mere moonshine. No following of that pattern would have helped the matter a particle. There the older Liturgies were; it was an easy thing to bring any of them into use, if the wants of the Church could have been satisfied in that way. But they were not satisfactory; the Church was all the time feeling and reaching after something better; and the Mayer Liturgy proved a flat failure, just because it was not something better, but the same thing in fact—the continuation of a mode or manner of worship, which it was felt the life of the Church had outgrown, so as to need now a different style of worship altogether.

I well remember how Dr. Rauch used to speak of this Liturgy.

He had no patience with its external, mechanical character; especially after the various tinkerings it had to undergo before its final adoption. A Liturgy, he used to say, in his earnest, genial way, should be of one cast, a single creation, ruled throughout by the presence of one central idea; in this respect, like a poem, or other true work of art. But what had we here? Dead forms only, bound together in a dead way; from which it was vain to expect, therefore, that the breath of life should be kindled in the devotions of the sanctuary. Such a Liturgy, he thought, could do the Church harm only, and not good.

Some years passed after this, before any serious movement was made toward getting out a better Liturgy. In the view of many, the matter was not held to be of any very great account. They were willing to abide by the system of free prayer, as it had place in the Presbyterian Church. That, I may say, was prevailingly my own position. I was not liturgical in those days, though not opposed to forms of prayer. But there was in the German Reformed Church somehow the power of a different spirit, that would not be kept down, but still cried, "Give us a Liturgy, whereby we may be able to worship God, like our fathers, with one mouth, as well as with one heart." Thus the Classis of East Pennsylvania urged the subject upon the attention of the Synod, which met at Lancaster in 1847; stating its dissatisfaction with the Mayer Liturgy, and asking that either the Old Palatinate Liturgy, or some other, should be adopted, and made of general use in its place. The whole subject was hereupon referred to the several Classes for their consideration. They reported favorably to the object the following year; and the Synod of Hagerstown accordingly (1848), after a long and earnest discussion, placed the matter in the hands of a special Committee (Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger, Chairman), with instructions to report at the next annual meeting of Synod. This report was presented to the Synod of Norristown in 1849, vindicating at large the use of liturgical forms, and recommending the appointment of a Committee to present at the next meeting of Synod a plan or schedule for a Liturgy, such as the wishes of the Church were supposed to require. The report was

adopted; and a *Liturgical Committee*, as it came to be called afterwards, was constituted, for the purpose of carrying its recommendation into effect.

The Committee consisted of the following persons: *Ministers*, J. W. Nevin, Philip Schaff, Elias Heiner, B. C. Wolff, J. H. A. Bomberger, H. Harbaugh, J. F. Berg; *Elders*, William Heyser, J. C. Bucher, Dr. C. Schaeffer, and G. C. Welker.

Here properly starts, at the Synod of Norristown in 1849, the particular Liturgical Movement, which, running through a series of seventeen years, has issued finally in the Revised Liturgy as it now stands, and the history of which Dr. Bomberger has contrived so strangely to fabricate into a wholesale slander, of the vilest sort, against the Committee by whom it has been produced.

Let no one imagine, however, that I propose to follow him in the details of his pretended historical argument, with the view of showing them untenable and false. That would be, indeed, both time and labor thrown away. He abounds in special pleading, and wastes page after page on points, that are, when all is done, of no account for the main issue in hand. He lays himself out largely to show that the Synod from time to time clearly and plainly had one object in view, while the Committee was just as clearly and plainly bent on carrying out another object; and it is wonderful what an amount of petty, quibbling interpretation he employs to make the case appear in this false light. There is a great parade of trying to bring out in this small way the sense of particular documents and facts, as though this must necessarily show historical veracity and candor. But who does not know, how easy it is to make this sort of exactness in particulars the medium of wholesale misrepresentation in regard to what is general? This is just what Dr. Bomberger has done; and what is required, therefore, is not a rectification of his historical positions and points in detail, but a broad exposition rather of the universal falsehood that runs through his tract. This can be done, happily, without much trouble.

A simple statement of the theory, on which the Doctor constructs what he calls his History of the Ritualistic Movement

in the German Reformed Church, is enough to overthrow, for any reflecting mind, the credit of the whole thing. It is too monstrously absurd for any sober belief. It bears the stamp of wholesale falsification on its very face.

The theory runs as follows:—The Synod of the German Reformed Church proposed to have a new Liturgy, and appointed a Committee of supposed reliable men (Dr. Bomberger and Dr. Berg among them), to bring out the work. The Synod had, at the same time, a very clear conception of what it wanted and wished in this movement, and took pains, from year to year, to make the Committee understand exactly the character of the service they were expected to perform. Strangely enough, however, this Committee seemed to be possessed, from the beginning, with a determination *not* to do the very thing they were charged to do in this solemn way. Nay, worse than this; it soon became only too evident, that the Committee had deliberately made up their mind (Drs. Berg and Bomberger still among them), to do the very opposite of the thing they were thus charged to do; that they had, in other words, conceived the plan of another order of worship, a liturgical service altogether different from what the Synod was thinking and resolving about, and now set themselves systematically to the task of bringing the Synod to accept their scheme, instead of its own. It was a bold purpose, assuredly; but the men also were bold, who had it in hand; their position in the Church gave them mighty advantage; and the event has shown that their policy was at once far reaching and profound. They knew it was in vain to think of carrying their point with the Synod openly and directly. So they went to work stealthily, and with circuitous management and stratagem, to accomplish their object; content to wait through years, if only they might be sure of reaching it in the end. With this view, it became necessary, first of all, to stave off action in regard to the Liturgy; in order that time might be gained in this way for working the mind of the Church round, by skilful manipulation, to a new way of looking at the subject, and so room be made for palming off upon it at last what the Committee wished to give it, in place of what the Church itself wanted to have.

Such was the situation of things from the very beginning of this Liturgical Movement; and here it is we have the key, which, properly applied, is sufficient to unlock the secret sense of all its historical intricacies, as regards both the Committee and the Synod. The history of the movement is simply the progress of a curious game between these two bodies—all simplicity on the one side, and all duplicity (diabolically astute) on the other—in which the Committee succeeds in out-witting and out-generalling the Synod through seventeen weary, mortal years; so as to bring things to the melancholy pass they have now reached in the Revised Liturgy. Whether the Committee acted, or refused to act, it all meant the same thing. Their one grand object throughout, was to baffle and defeat the wishes of the Synod; and this they did with a vengeance. Never, surely, was Government, political or religious, so impudently bamboozled before. The Synod had the power all in its own hands; might have had things at any time its own way; could have said whenever it pleased: "Gentlemen of the Liturgical Committee, you have been appointed to do the work we want, in the way we want, and not in any other way; and if you do not choose to do it in this way, go about your business; we will appoint another Committee to do the work in your place." This the Synod could have said and done at any time; but just this the Synod never did say, and never would do. On the contrary, it persisted all along in holding this same refractory Committee to its task. Year after year, the Committee reported, according to Dr. Bomberger, that it was *not* doing what the Synod wanted; year after year, the Synod accepted the report, and continued the Committee in service—all the while reiterating, according to Dr. Bomberger, in spirit, at least, if not in form, its original instructions. No other Committee could serve its turn but this. No other, it was supposed, could produce a Liturgy to its satisfaction. In spite of all its miserable contumacy, tergiversation, and treasonable malpractice, no other was to be thought of for a moment as worthy of the same confidence. It must be either this Liturgical Committee or none. O marvellous Committee! No wonder there should be to Dr. Bomberger's vision "a ser-

pent" in the Liturgy itself, when the magicians that produced it could exercise such basilisk enchantment over the senses of the venerable body they thus played fast and loose with, through a period of seventeen years.

The mere statement of such a theory as this, I repeat, is enough to cover it with confusion. It is outrageously preposterous. No man in his senses can believe it. Yet this is just what all comes to, in Dr. Bomberger's professed history of what he calls the ritualistic movement in the German Reformed Church. There is no true history in it. With all its talk about fairness and candor, documents and facts, it is nothing more than a caricature of history from beginning to end.

The movement inaugurated at Norristown in 1849, he says, contemplated no such Liturgy as we have now offered for our use. This is very true, and needs no argument whatever. The Committee was instructed to "examine the various Liturgies of the Reformed Churches, and other works published on this subject in later times, and specify, as far as this may be done, the particular forms that are believed to be needed, and furnish specimens also, such as may be regarded as called for in the circumstances of the Church in this country." All this, evidently, looks only to the conception of a book of forms for the pulpit; and falls far short of what the idea of a liturgical service has come to mean among us since that time. It is worthy of being noted, however, that even at this early stage of the movement, it was held that there should be no mere following of European examples in what was done, but a proper regard, also, to the circumstances of the Church in this country.

At the Synod of Martinsburg, the following year, 1850, the Liturgical Committee was heard from, as follows: "The Committee appointed to commence the preparation of a new Liturgy, respectfully report, that after such attention as they have been able to give to the subject, and in view of the general posture of the Church at the present time, they have not considered it expedient, as yet, to go forward with the work. Should it be felt necessary on the part of the Synod to bring out at once a new formulary for public use, it is believed that the

most advisable course for the present would be to give a translation simply of the old Liturgy of the Palatinate; although the Committee are, by no means, of the mind, that this would be the best ultimate form in which to provide for the great interest here in question. Altogether, it is felt, however, that other questions now before the Church need first to be settled, in order that it may become important really to bestow any full and final care on this question of a new Liturgy."

All this, certainly, looks innocent enough. The Committee felt that nothing they could make, in the way of compilation, out of the Palatinate Liturgy and others, would prove satisfactory; and they gave this as a reason for their not having gone forward with the work assigned them; while they say, at the same time, that if Synod thought otherwise, and *must* have a formulary of the sort proposed without farther delay, then the Committee recommend simply the Old Palatinate Liturgy itself as the best present provision for the case.

But see, now, how Dr. Bomberger manages to look at so plain and simple a matter through his green, historical spectacles. Here, at the very outset, he tells us, we are met with that diplomatic duplicity, which is found to characterize the relations of the Committee to the Synod all along afterwards. He has the impudence to say, without a particle of proof, that "the real import of the reasons" assigned by the Committee, "for not at once proceeding with their work," was not what these seemed to mean at the time on their face. There was no honesty in their report. "The Synod had not asked the Committee to investigate anew the subject of ecclesiastical ritualism; to take into consideration the expediency or the advisableness of going forward with the preparation of suitable forms; to inquire into the present posture of the Church; or to raise other similar side issues." What they did now, in doing nothing, was the beginning of their refractoriness, and ominous of trouble. "This was the first instance in the history of this liturgical movement, in which the Committee, through the influence of its leading members, set up its own opinions and wishes, in

opposition to those of the Synod and the Church; unhappily, it was not the last."

Is not this the sublimity of nonsense? Did not the Committee recommend the Palatinate Liturgy, if one must be had at once, as the best thing they felt themselves prepared to bring forward at that time? What was there, then, to hinder the Synod from adopting it, and urging the use of it upon the churches? The Committee stated frankly their own opinion, that this would not prove ultimately satisfactory; but the Synod was not bound, in any way, to have the same judgment. Why did it not go on, then, to have the Palatinate Liturgy translated and published? Plainly, because it thought, with the Committee, that the circumstances of the Church called for something different. No censure was passed on the Committee. They were continued in office and trust, as before.

One year after this, at the Synod of Lancaster, 1851, the Liturgical Committee again present themselves, and report no progress. They had not found the way open to do anything they could be satisfied with, in the work placed in their hands; and they had come to despair very much of their being able to produce any Liturgy, that would prove generally and permanently satisfactory to the Church. This was especially my own feeling. I had not led the way at all in the movement; my heart was not in it with any special zeal; I was concerned with it only in obedience to the appointment of Synod; other interests appeared to me at the time to be of more serious account; and I had no faith in our being able to bring the work to any ultimate success. In these circumstances, I was not willing to stand charged with the responsibility of continuing Chairman of the Committee; and I asked the Synod, accordingly, to relieve me from this position; with the understanding that I would be willing to act with it still in a subordinate character. The request was granted, and Dr. Schaff was made Chairman in my place. The name of Prof. T. C. Porter, at the same time, was added to the Committee.

All this again looks innocent enough; for common eyes, there would seem to be no mystery about it whatever. But only see

once more, what becomes of it, when subjected to the disordered vision of Dr. Bomberger. I get no credit for giving up the leadership of the Committee; on the contrary, it seems to be regarded rather as a stroke of policy, which was designed to help on the general object of obstructing the work the Synod was vainly struggling to get done; although happily, in this case, it seems again, the Synod saw through the *ruse*, and waved it handsomely to the one side. "It was probably understood," we are told, "by most of the clergymen at least of the Synod, why Dr. Nevin had been unable to carry out the wishes of the Church in the work of the Liturgy, and why he desired to be relieved from all responsibility as Chairman of the Committee. But the Synod showed no disposition to modify its views, in order to accommodate them to his opinions in the case. Had there been any thought of departing from the purpose and principles at first laid down by the Synod of Norristown, this would have been a fitting time to bring out such a thought. Instead, however, of betraying any tendency in this direction, the Synod held fast to its original design, accepted Dr. Nevin's resignation, appointed Dr. Schaff in his place, and impliedly, said: Now, brethren, we hope you will have no farther difficulty in pressing forward rapidly with the work, according to instructions previously given, but be able to report its early completion." How the plot thickens! How the history becomes clear as mud!

The hypothesis is, that the Committee have joined hands to thwart the Synod in its design to have a certain kind of Liturgy. Dr. Schaff and myself are at the bottom of the conspiracy; we have conceived the idea of reaching, at last, another order of worship altogether, and are doing all we can, theologically, to bring about such a result; we have engaged the Committee to hold back the liturgical movement; and my giving up the helm is only part of the play, intended to bring matters to a deadlock, and thus force the Synod to come into our views. The Synod has some dim sense, however, of the way things are going; winks significantly at the last sly trick in particular; places the rudder in the trustworthy hands of Dr. Schaff; leaves the impracticable Committee constituted, in all other respects,

as before; and bids a hearty God-speed to their labors, with instruction to "report as soon as possible." Is not that rich?

Dr. Schaff now went to work in earnest, and set the rest of us to work also, in preparing forms. He had faith in the movement; as for myself, I had, I confess, almost none. Still, I tried to do my share of service, and spent hours in what was found to be generally a tedious and irksome task. The work involved, necessarily, liturgical studies; and these brought with them a growing liturgical culture, which required an enlargement of the range, within which it was proposed, originally, to confine the course of the movement.

In the report of the Committee, made to the Synod of Baltimore in 1852, through Dr. Schaff, all this is brought fairly and fully into view. It gave a plan of such a Liturgy as was proposed; set forth the principles on which it should be constructed, and offered some specimens of what it was expected to contain. In this report, the ground is taken distinctly, that the new Liturgy ought not to be shaped simply after modern models, reaching back no farther than the Reformation; that among these later schemes of worship, "special reference ought to be had to the Old Palatinate and other Reformed Liturgies of the sixteenth century"; but that the general basis of the work should be "the liturgical worship of the Primitive Church, as far as this can be ascertained from the Holy Scriptures, the oldest ecclesiastical writers, and the Liturgies of the Greek and Latin Churches of the third and fourth centuries." Should the principles proposed be conscientiously and wisely carried out, the report, in conclusion, adds, "it is hoped that, by the blessing of God, a Liturgy might be produced at last, which will be a bond of union, both with the ancient Catholic Church and the Reformation, and yet be the product of the religious life of our denomination in its present state."

Dr. Bomberger troubles himself sorely with this famous Baltimore report. The Synod, he thinks, hardly knew what it was about, when it was induced to adopt it. "There was no time taken," he tells us, "to weigh its import. There was no dissection of its several parts, no discussion of its pregnant pro-

positions. With all the saving, modifying clauses, which we shall show it contains, it cannot be denied, that it proposes great departures from the original design and purpose of the Synod." This is a great confession, coming from Dr. Bomberger. But he tries bravely again to do away with its damaging effect; by catching at all the "saving, modifying clauses" he can find in the case, and making use of them in the way of very small chicanery and special pleading, to show that after all the action of Synod here, does not mean as much as it seems to mean. Matters might have been worse. There is room for praise in what was done, as well as blame. The wisdom of the Synod shines beautifully through its folly; its unseemly haste is characterized, after all, by great caution. "It is very significant," our ecclesiastical Philadelphia lawyer tells us, "that its action is expressed in such cautious terms." "Hastily as this important report was disposed of, there is no such endorsement of its peculiar sentiments, no such committal even to the general basis and plan of liturgy now proposed, or to the proposed departures from the first purpose and aim of Synod in this whole movement, as should be considered sufficient to bind the Synod and the Church to all the details of the report, or to debar all modifications and objections which subsequent reflection might suggest." Precious crumbs of comfort for the chickens of the covenant, truly, in so hard a case! "It proves the wisdom of the body," it is added, "that it spoke with so much official reserve upon the subject. The report was simply adopted, without any expression on its merits." Only this, and nothing more; saving merely a resolution, bidding the Committee to go ahead with their work, and "to carry out the suggestions made at the close of their report." Only *this;* "even suppose the pound of flesh is rigorously exacted, and the Synod held relentlessly to the letter of the bond." *Only* this, O Shylock; and nothing more.

A truce, however, to this pleasantry. I have no mind to stand strictly upon the pound of flesh; and do not care at all to run a race of special pleading with Dr. Bomberger for the exact letter of this Baltimore bond. It may not mean, in the circumstances, all that it has been logically made to mean since.

It is very likely, the Synod did not closely weigh terms, and that, for a large part of it at least, the full import of its action was not, at the time, distinctly considered. But what then? Are we to suppose, that it had not at least a general sense of what it was about? This general sense, in the case, is all we care for; and it is, in fact, also all that is needed, to take the wind out of Dr. Bomberger's historical hobby, and to place the liturgical movement before us in its true light.

Movement there was in the matter, beyond all controversy or question. The Committee had moved; they make no secret of the fact; they come before the Synod, asking an enlargement of the terms of their commission. And now it appears that there has been movement also in the Synod. The confession the Committee make of their troubles is taken in good part. It ought not to have been so, according to Dr. Bomberger. "Who had directed them," he asks, "to make the study of medieval or still earlier liturgies and litanies an essential part of their work? Who had requested them to make selections of services from works issued before the Reformation? Not the Synod. On the contrary, not trusting to what might be taken for granted, the Synod, as we have seen, from the first, used the precaution of naming, definitely, the sources from which it expected the matter of the new Liturgy to be substantially drawn. These were genuine Reformed Liturgies from that of the Palatinate (1663) onwards." What business had the Committee, then, to be bewildering and befogging themselves, like wayward, truant children, with studies outside of these wholesome limits. "Above all, what propriety was there in seeking to involve the Synod and the Church in perplexities, by which, through their disregard of very definite instructions, they had become embarrassed? Neglecting to use the chart and compass put into their hands by the Church, they had become entangled in the wilderness. Why seek to entice the Church into that same wilderness, not to help them out, but to lodge or wander there with them?" The case is well put. All can see that. But, unfortunately, this Baltimore Synod would not look at the matter in that way. It did not get angry with the

Committee; did not scold it; did not bid it back, like a set of naughty children, to the bounds from which it had wilfully strayed. On the contrary, the Synod professed to be well pleased with the Committee; approved its wandering studies; had compassion on its perplexities; and generously granted all it asked in the way of enlarged powers. The Church, in other words, followed the Committee into the wilderness. Was there no movement in all this? Did the Synod of Baltimore stand, in regard to the liturgical question, just where the Synod of Norristown stood three years before? Could it possibly dream that it did so, in the surroundings of its action? No amount of pettifoggery can set aside, what all the world may so easily see to be the plain meaning of so plain a case.

The matter, however, admits and requires a still broader view than this. Whatever the Baltimore Synod meant by its action, that action was not final. It could not bind the Church, says Dr. Bomberger, against the reaction of better subsequent thought rearward. Just as little, say we, could it bind the Church against the movement of better subsequent thought forward. Our concern, in the case of these Baltimore principles and instructions, is, after all, not so much with what they meant for the Baltimore Synod itself, as with the sense in which they have been actually carried out since by the Liturgical Committee, under the eye and open sanction of more than a dozen later Synods. With regard to this, at all events, there can be no mistake. The liturgical movement, the true inward history of the new Liturgy, did not begin in 1852; and it was very far from having come to its end there.

The names of the Rev. Dr. D. Zacharias, and Elders G. Schæffer and J. Rodenmayer, were now substituted, in the Committee, for those of the Rev. Dr. Berg (who had gone into the Reformed Dutch Church), and the Elders, J. C. Bucher and Dr. C. Schæffer (deceased). There was added to it, also, the name of the Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Fisher.

Three years now passed, before we hear of another report from the Liturgical Committee. It was working to some extent; but not with any comfortable feeling of success. During

part of the time, Dr. Schaff was in Europe. Much that was done was felt to be afterwards unsatisfactory. There was an accumulation of material, which brought with it no light or order in the work of construction. The more the Committee read and studied, and talked together, on the subject, the more they found that it was no small thing to make a Liturgy; and could only smile at the easy credulity with which it had been imagined at the first, that such a work might be carried through in the course of a single year. One great difficulty was, that the work seemed continually to unsettle and destroy itself. What was done, would not stay done; but had all the time to be done over again. In knowing the wreck of matter, and the crush of forms, through which the hard way of the Committee thus led them, one is tempted to think Dr. Bomberger half right; and to ask what business they had then to be troubling themselves with out of the way studies, which nobody required at their hands. Why should they have left the green pastures of ignorance, and the quiet waters of tradition, where they were first put to the working out of their task? Why, indeed, O foolish, straying, and now much-bewildered Liturgical Committee.

At the Synod of Chambersburg, however, in 1855, we meet them again; and are pleased to learn, from their report, that they have made progress, and are in a fair way to get their work before the Church in the course of the coming year. But the tone in which they speak of it is anything but sanguine. "A growing sense," they say, "of the great difficulty and responsibility of the task intrusted to their care, and of their insufficiency satisfactorily to perform it, has brought them to the conclusion strongly to dis-advise any final action of Synod, for some time to come, on this subject; which is so intimately interwoven with the most vital and sacred interests of the Church, and which is just now beginning to be seriously agitated also in various other Protestant denominations of our country. Their intention is simply to furnish, according to the best of their ability, a *provisional* liturgy, including a sufficient variety of forms for examination and optional use, until the Church be

fully prepared, by practical experience, to bring it into such a shape and form as will best suit the wants of our ministers and congregations, and make it, under the blessing of God, a rich fountain of sound piety and fervent devotion for many generations."

The Synod, as usual, made the action of the Committee its own. The report was adopted; the proposition in regard to a provisional liturgy was approved; and order was taken to provide for its publication. At the same time, the Rev. Dr. E. V. Gerhart was added to the Committee.

The Committee went on working; but found it impossible still to bring their work to a close so soon as they had expected. Meeting after meeting was called; and session after session was devoted to the task of reviewing preparations, discussing principles, weighing thoughts, and measuring the proper sense of words. A most important educational discipline, all felt it to be who took part in it, not only in a liturgical but also in a theological view. But the discipline was laborious and discouraging. As before, it was hard to get things finally fixed. Reconstruction and reorganization seemed to have no end. At last, however, though not until another meeting of Synod had passed, the end did come; and the Committee met, for the last time as they trusted, in October, 1857, to subject their work to a final joint revision, and to superintend its rapid progress through the press.

This was an interesting occasion. The entire work, previously examined and agreed upon in parts, was now, after a new general review, adopted unanimously as a whole, in the form in which it became known afterwards as the *Provisional Liturgy*. It is a little curious, that the only notice we have of this meeting, and of the merits of the new Liturgy, published at the time, is from the pen of the same Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger, who sees in the whole Liturgical Movement now nothing less than a foul conspiracy against the dearest interests of the German Reformed Church. It is to be found in a long article which he published in the *German Reformed Messenger* of November 18, 1857, devoted wholly to the purpose of recom-

mending the work. It can do no harm, to borrow here a few touches from this fine old historiographical sketch. They belong properly to our subject.

The Committee, it should have been stated, met in Philadelphia. The occasion was metropolitan. "Its final sessions," we are informed, "were held in the old consistory room of the Race street German Reformed Church, and around the same old walnut table, at which Schlatter, Wynckhaus, Hendel, Helffenstein, and Weiberg, all of blessed memory, had so often been seated, when presiding over the council of the congregation, or instructing the youth of their charge in the holy doctrines of our religion, as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism. The sessions of the Committee were closed with a fervent thanksgiving prayer, and the singing of the doxology."

Now for the character of the work. "The *Plan* and *Principles* reported to the Synod of Baltimore in 1852, and then approved of"—it is thus the Dr. Bomberger of 1857 can talk—"have been faithfully adhered to in the execution of the work. Accordingly, while everything has been made to yield to the true standard and spirit of genuine Evangelical Protestantism, and especially to the Reformed type thereof, scope has been given to that liberal, catholic spirit, which constitutes one of the most glorious characteristics of an elevated Christian freedom, and is the beautiful contrast of every sort of bigotry and exclusiveness. 'All things are yours,' is the assurance of the Apostle. The Evangelical Catholic Christian, therefore, may appreciate every thing that is good, and make it auxiliary to his faith, his piety, and his love. He need despise, or reject, no age, no nation, no Church, no body of Christians who hold the truth in righteousness, but regard all with charity, and learn from all, with meek wisdom, whatever they may offer for his improvement. In this spirit, according to the Plan and Principles referred to, the Committee, like the prudent scribe (Matt. xiii: 52), seems to have endeavored to bring forth, out of the rich treasures of the Church, things old and new, that by all combined, the edification of Christ's flock may be secured. But the Christian liberality of spirit thus exercised

has been, we believe, limited at all points by ultimate reference to our old standard Palatinate Liturgy. So that while such modifications (in the general plan, in the specific forms, and in the pervading style), as were felt to be expedient and necessary, have been freely allowed, the new work will be found to be in essential agreement with the old. It may be said to be what the original framers of the Palatinate Liturgy would have made it, had they lived and labored in such a period as ours."—"The book, like every thing else new, will have to be tried, before any right judgment can be passed upon it. If only it be tried in candor!"—"If only the sacramental, festival, and special forms of the new work should come into general public use in our Church, a greatly beneficial influence must be exerted. We have seen and read these forms, and feel confident that they will commend themselves to the warmest approval of all who will seriously and candidly study them."—"Although the forms for the administration of the sacraments are intended to be used chiefly by pastors and people collectively on the appropriate occasions, they will be found no less instructive for private perusal. Parents, who have been blessed with children, whom they have given to the Lord in baptism, would find much admonition and profit in the baptismal service. The reading of it at intervals, in their homes, and to their children, would keep all concerned in beneficial remembrance of what had been promised and done. And nothing, in the way of outward help, would be so well calculated (in the writer's full conviction) to promote the worthy and comfortable observance of the Holy Supper, as the devout perusal of the communion service on the evening, or several times during the week, before the sacramental Sunday."

Who would imagine this to be the very same Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger, that now breathes out threatenings and slaughter against the Liturgy in its revised form; who sees in it all manner of "Gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire;" and who especially denounces its baptismal and communion services (in no material point changed from what they were in 1857), as being surcharged with theological poison of the very worst kind!

At the Synod of Allentown in 1857, the Committee reported what was now done. The Provisional Liturgy was complete, and in the printer's hands. The report was adopted; and the following vote of thanks was passed at the same time, showing the light in which the services of the Committee were regarded. It does not sound much like alienation of confidence, or soured humor. The whole runs: "RESOLVED, That our most devout thanks are due to the Great Head of the Church, for having sustained the brethren of the Committee in their weighty labors, and for having gifted them with that spirit of cordial harmony essential to the success of such an undertaking. RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Synod are due, and are hereby tendered, to the brethren of the Committee, for the strict attention, the untiring perseverance, the self-denying labors, and the unwavering fidelity, which they have devoted to the work assigned to them, and that this Synod heartily commend them to the blessing of Almighty God, and to the warmest regard and love of the German Reformed Church." And yet, according to Dr. Bomberger, this same Committee (himself among them) had been fooling the Synod for eight long years; *not* doing all the time what the Synod wanted done; and now at last stood there insulting the Synod to its very face, with the offer of a Liturgy, the like of which nobody had dreamed of in 1849 at Norristown!

The Provisional Liturgy, of course, carried with it no binding authority of any kind for the churches. They were merely allowed to make use of it, in whole or in part, if they saw proper. It was put forth professedly as an experiment. By an understanding with the publishers, this arrangement was to run on for at least ten years.

I had no expectation myself, that the work would be generally adopted. It was not fitted for easy and smooth practice; it seemed to be too great a change for our churches; the very fact of its being an experiment, stood in the way of any general serious effort to bring it into use. Still I did not feel that the labors of the Committee had been thrown away. The work had its literary value. It might do good service educationally. It

was a relief to feel, at all events, that with it we had reached a decent end for our long, weary pilgrimage in search of a Liturgy; for there was no reason to think we could now reach our object in any other way. The Church might not be prepared at all for this new order of worship; but it was just as clear, that she could not now be satisfied with any such book of forms as was thought of in the beginning. We were beyond that. We had got into the wilderness together; and the best we could do was to make up our minds now to stay there for forty years at least, leaving it for the next generation to get up their own Liturgy, should they think proper, in a way to please themselves. That was about the feeling in which I had come to settle down comfortably in regard to the whole matter; and it gave me any thing but pleasure to be rudely jostled out of it, a few years later, by the cry that was raised for a *Revision*.

The Liturgy, in fact, did not get into any general use. In that respect it proved a failure. Yet it was wonderful to see, how it worked notwithstanding as a silent influence among us, in favor of sound ideas on the subject of Christian worship. It wrought a change, far and wide, in the spirit and form of our sanctuary services. It served to deepen among us the power of the liturgical movement, which had given it birth. It became more and more apparent, that this movement could not be turned back; could not be arrested, and made to stand still. Its only redemption and deliverance lay in going forward.

Three years later, at the Synod of Lebanon, in 1860, the Liturgical Committee made their final report, and were discharged. The subject of revision had now come to engage considerable attention; and this same Synod, accordingly, passed an act referring the work to the examination of the Classes, for the purpose of obtaining their judgment of what was desirable with regard to it in this view.

Meanwhile, however, the old treasonable practising of the Committee against the Church was kept up, according to Dr. Bomberger, even worse than before. The Committee, as such, indeed, was discharged, and had no longer any existence; but its members were as badly alive and awake as ever; and their

plan was now to have the work of revision deferred (as they had held back the work of preparation before, with masterly inactivity, through so many years), in the hope that the Provisional Liturgy, every where unpopular, might still go on nevertheless to infect the popular mind with its deleterious poison; so that the way should be open finally for revising it at last into the full-blown ritualism, which it had been in the heart of this conspiracy all along to compass and reach. And now let the world take note of "a remarkable phenomenon, having relation to the general movement, which appeared during the year 1861"—a sort of prodigy in the heavens, that might well cause children at least to stand aghast. The Liturgy would not take with the grown membership of the Church; the people refused to be educated by it out of their old notions and customs. So the defunct Committee, it would seem, said somehow among themselves: "Go to now; we will send forth a lying spirit among the children, whereby they can be reached and trained into the new ways. Children and youth are pliant and unsuspicious; they can be taught and moulded to any thing." A new Sunday-school Hymn Book, for which, unfortunately, there was only too much need at the time, with proper ritualistic apparatus, suggested itself as a proper medium for the end proposed; and a suitable organ to produce it was not long wanting. The plot, accordingly, was carried into effect. "Such a Hymn Book," we are solemnly informed, "was prepared by the Rev. Dr. Harbaugh, a member of the Liturgical Committee, and was sent forth on its Jesuitical mission." Was it not, then, by the instigation of the Committee? If not, pray, by *whose* instigation?

At the Synod of Easton, in 1861, the action of the several Classes on the question of revision, was reported at large. It did not amount to much. The Classes were greatly divided in their judgment; and so far as any suggestions were made in regard to what should be modified or changed, they were of too loose and indeterminate a character altogether to be of any practical account. The whole subject, in truth, was exceedingly confused. Nobody doubted the necessity of having the Liturgy

revised sooner or later, if it was ever to come into general use; the only question was, whether the revision should go on immediately, or be postponed, for years at least, if not indefinitely. For reasons already given, I was myself in favor of indefinite postponement.

The proposition to take the work in hand at once, however, prevailed. After considerable discussion, the Synod took action as follows: "RESOLVED, That the Provisional Liturgy be placed in the hands of the original Committee for final revision; and that the Committee be instructed to consider the suggestions of the Classes as given in the minutes of their late meetings, and use them in the revision of their work, as far as the general variety of the work will allow, and in a way that shall not be inconsistent either with established liturgical principles and usages, or with the devotional or doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church. That the Committee be requested to report at the next annual meeting of the Synod, if possible, with a view of bringing this devotional work to a consummation desired by the Church, during the Tricentennial commemoration of the Heidelberg Catechism."

To any unsophisticated mind, the sense of this proceeding is abundantly plain. It did not mean, that the Committee must fall back on the old Norristown instructions of 1849; that the Synod had not changed at all its views of what a Liturgy should be since that time; and that the course of the Committee, in not carrying them out heretofore, had been refractory and contumacious. Nothing of this sort. It meant plainly a reiteration of the Baltimore instructions of 1852; in the sense in which these had been distinctly understood and acted upon by the Committee afterwards; in the sense in which every body could see that they had been actually wrought into the constitution of the Provisional Liturgy. That was, in fact, an attempt to bring the liturgical life of the first ages into harmonious union with the devotional and doctrinal genius of the Reformed Church in modern times. And now the order of Synod is, not that it should be pulled to pieces under pretence of amendment, but that its organic unity should be preserved; so that, through all

changes, it should remain substantially what it now was, and not be metamorphosed into something else of wholly different nature. This, unquestionably, is what the action of that Easton Synod means, and was intended to mean. And in token of it still farther, we have the old Committee called into existence again, to carry out the work; the very last agency, if Dr. Bomberger's misrepresentations were correct, that should have been thought of for any such purpose. It would have been easy to appoint a new Committee. But no; that would not do. Only the old Committee, it was supposed, could do proper justice to their own work. Let them have full power, therefore, to manage this liturgical question, as before. The Synod will have no other Committee.

Many will remember how earnestly I tried, at this time, to have my own name, at least, dropped from this new commission. I told the Synod, that I had no faith in the undertaking; that I did not think the Church was prepared to receive the Liturgy in any form we could give it; that I knew the proposed work would involve far more than the slight changes some talked of; that I was sure the Committee would not be able to get forward now with full agreement; that there was no reason then to expect that the Church generally would be satisfied with what was done; that in these circumstances the service appeared to me a thankless waste of labor and time; that I had no heart for it, and could not take part in it with any animation or zeal; and that my want of spirit in this way would make me a dead weight only on the cause I was expected to serve. All this I urged; and fairly begged, over and over again, to be excused from the appointment. But the Synod would not hearken to my prayer. The old Committee must serve; and I *must* serve with it—in spite of all I had done, according to Dr. Bomberger, to upset the order and change the life of the German Reformed Church, by this very liturgical movement, in previous years.

In the face of these broad facts, what becomes of the special pleading of such a man, put forward here again, as in the case of the Synod of Baltimore, to torture words and phrases into

the service of his own fancies? Is it any thing better than so much idle wind?

When the Committee came together again, it turned out as I expected. There was a difference of opinion among them, in regard to the principles by which they were to be governed in their revision. Dr. Bomberger took one view of the subject, while the rest of the Committee in attendance took another. Three days, at least, were consumed in friendly discussion, and abortive attempts to get forward. Finally, it was felt necessary to refer the difficulty to Synod for settlement; whereupon the following action was unanimously adopted:

"WHEREAS, In the endeavor to revise the Provisional Liturgy, the Committee discover, after a long discussion, protracted through several days, that there is a radical difference of opinion among its members concerning the import of the resolutions of Synod; therefore, *Resolved*, That the Rev. Dr. J. W. Nevin prepare a report to Synod, setting forth a clear, definite, and full idea of both schemes of worship advocated in Committee, in order that Synod may understand the real question at issue, and state in explicit terms what it requires at our hands."

This took place in Lancaster. A meeting of the Committee was held subsequently in Lebanon, when the report thus called for was received, adopted, and ordered to be published for the consideration of the Church. Dr. Bomberger voted against this action. The report was presented to the next Synod, which met at Chambersburg in 1862, in the form of a tract, bearing the title: "The LITURGICAL QUESTION, with reference to the Provisional Liturgy of the German Reformed Church."

Much ado has been made about this tract. The object of it, however, is sufficiently plain. The liturgical interest among us had become embarassed by its own movement. There were mixed up in it two different conceptions of what a liturgy ought to be. We had started in 1849 with one; all of us, Committee and Synod, having in our mind at that time, almost entirely, the notion simply of a book of forms for the pulpit. But we were carried gradually beyond this, and came to feel more and more the meaning of worship in its proper congregational view; which

brought with it, of course, the idea of a liturgy directed and adapted more particularly to this end; the idea, in other words, of a liturgy belonging, not properly to the pulpit, but to the altar. Not that these two conceptions were consciously distinguished in this way. On the contrary, they ran more or less into one another; only with a growing preponderance of favor toward the idea of altar worship—even where the meaning of it was not yet fully understood. Under the plastic force of this sentiment it was, that the Provisional Liturgy had finally taken form and shape. It was prevailingly an order of worship for the altar. It became this mainly through its communion service, which was made to rule and control the movement of all its other services. There were some few forms in it, indeed, and parts of forms, which were not strictly coherent with this scheme, but might be said to be of the character rather of mere pulpit services; and so far it may be admitted that Dr. Bomberger is right in ascribing what he calls a duplex character to the work. But he is egregiously wide of the mark, when he speaks of by far the greatest portion of it as being of the type now referred to; to such extent, he says, as "greatly to overshadow, and almost exclude the other;" and nothing could well be more ridiculous, than his notion of converting the whole into a good and acceptable form book for the pulpit, by simply doing away with the responses, and striking out or changing a few passages here and there, supposed to be of objectionable sound. It is all the other way; the reigning character of the Provisional Liturgy is that of an altar service, and what there is in it that does not fall in with this conception, is there only by exception, and in the way of compromise, as it were, with the opposite scheme. So at least the Committee felt, which had produced it, all except Dr. Bomberger; and so they understood the Synod to feel, in the direction it had given them to be governed in their revision by a proper regard to "the general unity of the work." It was felt, at the same time, however, that there might be, and probably was, a measure of confusion still in the mind of the Church with regard to the subject; and when Dr. Bomberger now joined issue with the rest of us on this fundamental ques-

tion at the very threshold of our new work, there seemed to be but one course for us honestly and honorably to pursue. We would refer the question to Synod; and we would try to do this in such a way, as to cut off, if possible, all room for mistake, and to bring out the mind of the Synod in such sort that there should be no room to dispute about it afterwards. This was the object of the tract now under consideration; and it was purposely written in the form which seemed best suited to reach that object.

To Dr. Bomberger's jaundiced vision, this tract, like everything else done or left undone by the Committee, was part of our plan, either to cajole or dragoon the Church into the scheme of ritualism we were forging for its neck. But in that view, never surely did a band of conspirators play a more stupid game. For what course could the Committee have taken, that was more likely than just the publication of this tract, to rouse against them and their work all the anti-liturgical, or merely semi-liturgical spirit there was in the Church? Was it not a perfect godsend, in this respect, to Dr. Bomberger himself? Has it not been the armory, from which he has stolen his best thunder against the Liturgy ever since? Have not its "concessions" been held up, on all sides, to the people, as enough to damage and damn the work before all examination? Were we not gravely told at Dayton, by more than one respectable declaimer, that the Liturgical Committee had in this tract charged themselves with a design to revolutionize, radically, the ecclesiastical life of the German Reformed Church, and madly asked the Synod of Chambersburg, at the same time, to cooperate with them in carrying out their nefarious purpose? What truly magnificent cunning! What marvellous profundity of art!

Any honest person can see that the tract, instead of being an attempt to seduce the Synod into the views of the Committee, was, in fact, a most honest effort to place the whole subject in a light, which might preclude all blind judgment in regard to it, and bring the Synod to act upon it in the most free and independent way. Speaking for myself again, I may say that I

hardly expected or wished the Synod to fall in with the high view of altar worship presented in the tract. Had that body been prepared to say, "We want no such worship as that," I would have been content, and more than content, to be discharged from all further concern in the case. As it was, I was determined, at all events, that there should be no farther misunderstanding, if there had been any before, of what the Committee had been doing thus far, and of what they intended to do still, if they were required to go on with this work. With this view, the case was put in the most extreme light. The distinction between the two orders of worship (pulpit liturgy and altar liturgy) was drawn in clear lines; and in a way which has caused it to be understood since, and practically laid to heart, as it had not been before. The idea of an altar liturgy was declared to be alone worthy of respect. Then it was openly said, in substance: "This idea has governed the work of the Committee thus far, in conformity, as they have supposed, with the instructions of the Synod of Baltimore, in 1852; the Provisional Liturgy is an altar liturgy, in the sense of this tract; and it cannot be made to be any thing else, without destruction of its organic unity and wholeness. That, at least, is the judgment of the Liturgical Committee. It is for the Synod, then, to know and to say, what its real wishes are in this posture of the case. Shall the liturgical movement go on still in the line of this Provisional Liturgy, as thus determined by the sense of the Committee that framed it; or shall it be now stopped here, and turned into another and wholly different course?"

Dr. Bomberger, in the meantime, had been at work, in his own way, to out-plot the Committee. He had taken it into his head, that he could, himself, do up in short order what the Church wanted in this business of revision; and came, accordingly, prepared with a scheme of alterations and amendments, which he fondly hoped the Synod might be ready at once to adopt, and so end the whole matter. Of all this, he said not a word to the Committee, when he met with them previously in regular session, at Chambersburg; but sprung the whole sud-

denly upon Synod itself, in most unparliamentary style, by means of what he was pleased to call a minority report, in opposition to the report of the Committee. His proposed revision, however, found no favor! It only served to show how absurd it was to think of manufacturing the Provisional Liturgy into different shape in that mechanical way. There were not probably three members of the Synod who would have been willing to vote for the piebald affair. No vote, however, was taken upon it. There was an animated debate on the general subject of the Liturgy, continuing through three days; at the end of which it was decided, with overwhelming voice, that the way was not open for taking any further action in regard to the Provisional Liturgy at that time; that the optional use of it, as previously allowed, should be continued till the end of ten years from the time of its first publication; and that the whole question of its revision should be indefinitely postponed. The Liturgical Committee was thus dissolved a second time.

This took place in 1862. In the fall of 1863, the General Synod of the Reformed Church held its first meeting in Pittsburg. Here the subject was again called up, in connection with a request in regard to it from the Western Synod. Liberty was granted to this Synod to go on and prepare a new Liturgy, such as, in their view, might suit the wants of the Church; while it was recommended, at the same time, that the Eastern Synod also should go forward with the revision of its Liturgy according to its own judgment, so that it might come before the General Synod in complete form, with a view to final action upon the whole subject.

In conformity with this recommendation, the Eastern Synod, which met at Lancaster the following year, 1864, resolved that a Committee should be appointed to revise the Provisional Liturgy, so as to have it in readiness for being presented in the way required, to the next General Synod.

But only see now what a mess is made of all this by Dr. Bomberger, in his morbid desire to criminate the Liturgical Committee. Their relation to the Synod throughout, in his view, was one of disobedience and perverse unfaithfulness.

The work which Synod had expressly put upon them, three years before, they had failed to perform. Nay, they had even succeeded at Chambersburg, in 1862, in getting it indefinitely postponed; thus "gaining their point," we are told, which was *time*, in the interest of their "extreme ritualistic views." How the Synod could stand such treatment, was wonderful; yet stand it the Synod did, even to the extent of itself doing, unasked, in this last case, all the Committee secretly wished: wearied and worried out of all patience, it would seem, by the contradiction it was called to endure, and ready, at last, to do any thing, just for the privilege of being allowed to adjourn. Now, however, in 1864, one is pleased to find a much-abused Church freeing herself at long last from the badgering and browbeating to which she has been subjected, by her public servants, for so many years. In all conscience, the tragi-comic drama has been carried far enough; let it, then, come to an end. "It was evident," says Dr. Bomberger, speaking of the crisis to which things had come, "that no farther delay would be tolerated. Patient as the Church had always shown itself, even almost to weakness, toward the private views and desires of some of her leading men, and tolerant of what often wore the semblance of disobedience and dictation—tolerant as scarcely any other Church had ever been in similar circumstances—it was manifest that the action of the last two Synods (the General and the Eastern), plainly meant that the work must now be done." All praise, especially to the Lancaster Synod of 1864; it knows what it means in this business; and it means now to have it done.

Now then, first of all, for the agency to be employed in the resumption of the work. The old Committee is officially dead, and out of the way; *twice* plucked up by the roots; and after all its past offences, we might imagine, not to be thought of again in the present case. Let there be at least a wholesome reconstruction, leaving out a part of the old membership, and bringing into the room of it a new membership in sympathy with Dr. Bomberger. But can we believe our senses? This Lancaster Synod reiterates the madness of the Easton Synod. It

is the old Liturgical Committee, which is once more summoned to go forward with their old work. Not a man of them is excused; and strangest of all, to fill the places of the Rev. Dr. Heiner and Elder Heyser (deceased), we find now added to the Committee the names of the Rev. Thomas G. Apple and Dr. L. H. Steiner; men known by every body to be in no sympathy whatever with Dr. Bomberger in his late minority stand-point, but, on the contrary, in full sympathy with the majority stand-point opposed by him—and *for that very reason also* dignified with this appointment!

In this new commission, says Dr. Bomberger, "no instructions are given for the guidance and government of the Committee; but it is presumed, that no one will call in question the continued force of previous directions." That is (according to his monstrous hypothesis), after all that had gone before; after the Baltimore instructions, and the sense put upon them by the Committee; after the preparation of the Provisional Liturgy openly on this scheme; after the Easton instructions in regard to a revision, and the way in which these also were openly taken by the Committee; and above all, after the strong, not to say extreme statement they had made of their views in the tract offered to the Synod of Chambersburg: after all this, we say, the Synod of Lancaster, now in 1864, having re-constituted the same Committee, and filled out its vacancies with men known to be of one mind with it in all it had been doing and trying to do thus far; and now saying to it, without farther direction, "Go on, and complete your work;" did not mean at all that they should follow out their past profession of principles and views, but intended just the opposite of this—namely, that they had been wrong all along, and were now expected to take up and perfect their unfinished work, in what Dr. Bomberger held to be the way the Church had wanted it from the beginning. Simply to state the case, is to make it ridiculous.

It is, in truth, sheer nonsense. The Synod knew perfectly well where the Committee stood in regard to the whole subject, and with this knowledge re-appointed them, and bid them resume their work, without one syllable of qualifying direction.

How was it possible, in these circumstances, that the Committee should not take this for a full and formal authorization to go on as they had been doing before, and to perfect their work in its own order and kind, not by pulling it to pieces, but by bringing it into round unity and harmony within itself as an altar liturgy? They did so understand the Synod, and addressed themselves now vigorously to the task assigned them, with full determination to carry it out in this way.

Dr. Bomberger, however, was still obstinate. When the Committee met, he took his old ground again; maintained that we were utterly mistaken in supposing our scheme of revision to be approved by the Church; contended that Synod had, in fact (God knows when or where), endorsed *his* scheme, as the only one to be thought of in the case; and wondered now, that all the rest of us should not give up at once to his single judgment, where we were so clearly wrong, and he himself so clearly right. We could not, of course, yield to this; and after some friendly talk on the subject, it was concluded that we, who were the majority, and the next thing to the whole of the Committee, should go on with the work of revision in our own way; while Dr. Bomberger would simply co-operate with us as far as he could, without being understood to recede at all from his protest against what seemed to him wrong. He himself urged us to go forward in this way; and for a time continued to work with us, as pleasantly as could be desired.

But this did not last. As the revision advanced, and gave promise of being successfully carried through in its own line, Dr. Bomberger found it more than he could stomach. His discontent appears to have reached its climax, when the Committee reported progress to the Synod of Lewisburg, in 1865, and submitted their new forms for common Sunday Service and for the Holy Communion, as specimens of the manner in which they were carrying on their work. "No opinion upon the merits of these forms," he says, "was expressed by Synod."[a] This is very true. But this silence, in the circumstances, amounted to a great deal. Dr. Bomberger was there, and made a violent speech against the course the Committee were pursuing; so elo-

quently depicting the mischief which was to come of it, that one good brother, at least (innocent of much previous knowledge on the subject), was led to cry out, it is said, in a sort of panic fright, "Mr. President, can't we stop the Liturgy?" He tells us now, moreover, in his historical tract, that these very specimen forms are the worst part of what he considers worthy of condemnation in the Revised Liturgy. The Lord's day service is, in his view, "intensely ritualistic;" and the Communion service is denounced as "essentially inconsistent with the devotional genius of the Reformed Church, and utterly irreconcilable with the apostolic and primitive conception of the ordinance;" although it is, in fact, in no particular point different from the form in the Provisional Liturgy, which this same Dr. Bomberger consented to in 1857, and publicly commended to the Church as being not only good, but very good—"*nothing* in the way of outward help being so well calculated indeed (in his full conviction), to promote the worthy and comfortable observance of the Holy Supper, as the devout perusal" of just this service. These two pattern services, we say, the Synod had before it in 1865 at Lewisburg, with the benefit of Dr. Bomberger's damnatory criticism. And what now did the Synod do? "Expressed no opinion!" we are told. Oh, no, nothing of that sort; only paid no attention to Dr. Bomberger's damnatory criticism; and instead of *stopping* the Liturgy, ordered it on to completion. That was *all* the Synod did.

That was enough, however, for Dr. Bomberger. He sent us word by letter afterwards, that he could take no farther part with us in our work; we were not doing, he would still have it, what Synod wanted us to do; and so he would appeal to Synod against us when it next met. A sort of appellation, one might say, from Philip drunk, to the same Philip when it was hoped he might be sober.

The Committee went on, and finished their work; finished it greatly to their own satisfaction; not simply because they were through with it, but because they felt that they had been successful in bringing the book into a form suitable to the wants of the Church, and likely now to come at last into general use.

In this respect, my own feeling with regard to the Revised Liturgy was altogether different, from what it had ever been with regard to the Provisional Liturgy.

Thus completed, the work was presented, with a very brief report, to the Synod, which met last October at York, under the title: *An Order of Worship for the Reformed Church.* No sooner was this done, than Dr. Bomberger was on his feet again, to spring upon the house another of his unparliamentary interruptions, in the form of a long, elaborate, minority counter-report; which was offered as an apology for his not having acted with the Committee, but amounted, in fact, to a wholesale onslaught upon the work itself, and a most libellous defamation of the views and motives of all, who had been concerned in bringing it out. A libel, which has since been repeated deliberately and at large, in his history of what he calls the Ritualistic Movement in the German Reformed Church. It is wonderful with what effrontery, in this counter-report of his at York, he charges the entire Liturgical Committee (all except himself), as having been engaged, throughout, in a course of clear disobedience to the will and command of Synod, while *he*, singly and alone, had been laboring all along to set our refractory skulls right—but laboring, alas, in vain. He *could* not work with the Committee, it seems, because the Committee, ten against one, would not think as he did, but stubbornly insisted on thinking for themselves. Hence, these tears. "In this spirit, and for such reasons," he whines, "I come back to this Synod to-day from the mission upon which you sent me. I could not perform the duties of that mission in what I am most fully persuaded is the spirit and letter of your instructions, because my associates in the work"—thick-headed, stiff-necked jurymen as they all are—"would not aid me in such an execution of our trust. I would not perform them in any other way, not even to gratify any most favorite, subjective, personal views and tastes, because I believed that to do so involved disobedience to my ecclesiastical superior,"—the Synod, namely, which had been, all along, backing the Committee in their course—

"disloyalty to my Church, and infinite hazard to our spiritual peace and edification."

The action of the Synod of York, on the Revised Liturgy, is comprehended in a special report, adopted in regard to it, which may be allowed to speak for itself. After a brief general review of the liturgical movement, and the instructions of Synod with reference to it from time to time, the report goes on to say of the Committee and their work, as follows:

"These instructions, after much diligent labor, have been faithfully carried out, and, as the result of their labors, continued for the last three years, embracing forty-five sessions in all, we have now before us the Revised Liturgy, printed and prepared for the examination of Synod. The work bears on its face the indications of unwearied patience and perseverance, of self-denying toil, of an elevated and devotional taste, of much study and reflection, and an undeniable purpose to serve the Church and the cause of Christ. It is questionable, whether more labor and earnestness of purpose have ever been bestowed on any similar work, in Europe or in this country."—"The Liturgy, now presented to the Church, is fully as much the work of the Synod as of the Committee. It must be conceded, that the Committee have acted with prudence and respect for the instructions of Synod, at each step they have undertaken in the prosecution of their labors, and that all along they have been prompted and urged forward in their work by the special action of the Synod. It is, therefore, the legitimate child of this Synod. Whether it will ever come into general use among our congregations or not, it is evident that for all time to come, it will be a monument to the learning, ability, piety, and devotion of its authors to the liturgical idea, which they have so well comprehended."

Then follow these three resolutions:

"1. *Resolved*, That our thanks are due, and are hereby rendered, to the great Head of the Church, that this work, so far as Synod is concerned with it, has been brought to a termination."

"2. *Resolved*, That the thanks of the Synod are hereby ten-

dered to the Committee, for the zeal, ability, and unrequited toil, which they have displayed in the prosecution of their work, from the beginning to the end.

"3. *Resolved*, That the Revised Liturgy be referred to the General Synod for action, and that, in the meantime, the optional use of the Revised Liturgy be authorized, in the place of the Provisional Liturgy, within the limits of the Eastern Synod, until the whole question be finally settled by the various Classes and the General Synod, according to the Constitution of our Church."

By this action, the new Liturgy came into the hands of the late General Synod at Dayton, in conformity with the order issued three years before, by the General Synod of Pittsburg; and now it was, that its friends were brought first fully to see, what manner of spirit it was that actuated and ruled the opposition, which had begun to work against it. This opposition sought nothing less than the destruction of the young child's life. Although it had been declared all along, that it was such an order of worship as the people did not want, and never could be brought to receive with any sort of favor, yet, now that it stood there asking barely permission to live, and nothing more, it was felt that this would be unsafe. Who could tell what power might be slumbering in that gentle, peaceful form, after all? "Herod, and all Jerusalem with him, was troubled;" and so the fiat went forth, not openly altogether, but, as it were, in secret: "Let the Liturgy die, before it is well born; let it pass away as a hidden, untimely birth, and become thus as though it had never been."

We have seen before, that permission had been granted to the Western Synod, to form a Liturgy of their own. They had not liked the Provisional Liturgy of the East; let them get up, then, a different order of worship to suit themselves, and have it ready to present, also, to the next General Synod. They did put their hand to this task. A Liturgical Committee was appointed to carry it forward; which also went bravely to work, and in due time got forth some interesting specimens of what they were able to do in this line. But there the movement

came to an inglorious end. The specimen forms did not prove satisfactory, either to the public at large or to the Committee themselves. The *Complete Manual*, as it was christened beforehand, got no farther toward completeness; and so, when we came togother in General Synod at Dayton, we found no such work of the Western Synod there, but only an official act on their minutes, asking for more time to get it ready.

What we did find there very soon, however, was a pretty general determination on the part of these Western brethren to put out of the way the Revised Liturgy of the Eastern Church, now happily brought within their clutches, as it might seem, for this very purpose.

Whence, we may well ask, such unbecoming animosity in breasts otherwise generous and good? Partly, of course, from what we may call the natural opposition of the Western religious spirit to the whole idea of worship, under a liturgical form. But partly, also, beyond all doubt, from the factious industry and zeal of Dr. Bomberger and his clique in the East; who all along, but more especially of late, had been working upon this prejudice, and trying to persuade the Church in the West, that all things were going wrong in the Eastern Synod, both theologically and ecclesiastically; and that the salvation of the German Reformed Church, in America, now depended on the rising star of empire in the Synod of Ohio and the Adjacent States. This factious element had claimed, indeed, as we have seen, to be the reigning power in the Eastern Synod itself; but it had an uncomfortable sense still, of having been always, more or less, worsted there in its anti-liturgical conflicts; and it was a great satisfaction for it now, therefore, to think of joining hands with this ultramontane jealousy at Dayton, so as to roll off from the German Reformed Church, at once and forever, the reproach now resting upon it from the liturgical movement. No pains, accordingly, were spared, to win the political game. Dr. Bomberger's tract, on the "Ritualistic Movement," was got out hastily, and circulated far and wide. The *Western Missionary* was set to sounding a continuous alarm on the same theme. Ominous, bad-sounding words, were made to fall on all

sides upon the ears of the people. Appeals were addressed to their prejudices and their fears. All was done that could be done, to have the Liturgy prejudged and condemned, before it was either seen or read.

We all felt this when we got to Dayton. There was an element at work around us, that boded no good, but harm only, to the new Order of Worship. The opposition to it was strong; and it was called to give account of itself at what was, in one sense, a foreign bar. The Western delegation was full; the delegation from the East, especially in the case of the Elders, was only partially present. It was painfully evident, moreover, that the Western delegation itself had no power, as things stood in the West, to be entirely independent and free. Men could not vote in all cases as they might wish; but had to do it, in some cases at least, as they *must*.

Still would the brethren of the Western Synod seriously join hands with a miserable faction of the Eastern Synod, to subvert at one blow, in such a case as this, a work which had cost this last so many years of care and labor? That was hardly to be imagined beforehand; and I must confess it filled me with surprise, when I found that this, and nothing less than this, was what these Western brethren really proposed to do. We had it all brought out at last in the minority report, as it was called, on the subject of the Revised Liturgy, which every effort was made to have substituted for the majority report allowing its optional use. In this minority paper, drawn up by Professor Good of Tiffin, a long show of reasons was offered to prove that the Liturgy would not answer for the use of the Church; and on the ground of these reasons, preferred without any real examination of the book, the Synod was now asked to give judgment against it, without farther knowledge or inquiry; and to put it, along with the unfinished and abortive material of the Western Synod, into the hands of a new Committee; who should then go on to cut and patch all, at their pleasure, into some unknown shape, which, it was hoped, might satisfy at last the liturgical necessities of the German Reformed Church.

Could any thing well be more ironically absurd? It was more

than absurd, however; it was monstrous. Only look at the case. Here was the Eastern Synod, which had been working now through seventeen years to make a Liturgy. Its best strength, talent, learning, piety, patience, and perseverance, had been expended upon the object. Finally, after so long a time, the movement was felt to be crowned with success. It had issued the Revised Liturgy, which was now submitted to the General Synod, according to previous order, with the proud feeling of a duty well performed. For no one presumed to call in question the general merits of the book. It was allowed on all hands to be of the first order in its kind. It was, in this respect, an ornament and honor to the Church to which it owed its being. And how, now, was it proposed to receive the work in the General Synod? The proposition, in plain English, was nothing more nor less than this; that the General Synod should take the work out of the hands of the Eastern Synod, and just then and there, without farther ceremony, crush it ignominiously out of existence. What! without ever looking at it in the way of examination? without giving it so much as a chance to be known and judged on its own merits? Exactly so; let it perish without any troublesome and useless formality of this sort. But how is it expected that this can be done? Will the brethren of the Eastern Synod consent to be robbed of what has cost them so much, in such summary and ruthless style? It matters not; the book is now in the hands of the General Synod; only let the brethren of the West, by a sectional vote, join hand in hand with Dr. Bomberger and his company, and they will be able, it is to be hoped, to do with it what they please. Still, on what plea is all this violence to be done? What crime is charged upon the Liturgy? What evil has it wrought, to justify such wholesale rejection? How are those who are asked to join in this vote (ministers and elders), to know that it deserves such merciless treatment at their hands? Their knowledge is not needed; their ignorance will answer just as well; nay, the less they know of the matter, the better. They will be the more sure to vote then, as they are wanted to vote. Not one Western minister in ten, it is true, has examined the

book; not one Western elder in ten, probably, has so much as even looked into it. But what of all that? Have they not Dr. Bomberger's word for it, that it is full of all sorts of mischief? Has he not published a tract to put it down? Has not this been echoed by the "Western Missionary?" Are not Professors Good and Rust, and Williard, all here to make speeches against it? What need have we farther for witnesses? The power seems to be providentially in our hands. No time so favorable for the deed we meditate may ever occur again. Let the Revised Liturgy of the Eastern Synod die!

A beautiful spectacle truly, was it not, this attempt to turn the General Synod, at its second meeting, into an organ, through which the Synod of the West might be able to rule, as with a rod of iron, the mother Synod of the East!

One cannot help wondering and asking, what would have come of the radical proceeding, if it had been crowned with success. How would the brethren have disposed of the Liturgy, once fairly in their hands? It was to have gone into the hands of a new Committee, to be taken to pieces and reconstructed at their pleasure. But where was the Committee to be found for such work? The old Committee, of course, could not have been thought of in the case; neither was it to be imagined that any member of it would consent to take part in the service, unless it were Dr. Bomberger. Still farther, no friend of the Liturgy in the Eastern Synod could have had any thing to do with it. It must have been, then, mainly a Western Committee, composed of such men as the Brethren Williard, J. H. Good, Rust, and M. Stern, in conjunction with Dr. Bomberger, and one or two others that may be imagined, from the East. The respectability of such a Committee, in itself considered, need not be called in question. But the idea of placing the finished work of the Eastern Synod in its hands, as so much *material* simply, along with the botched stuff previously prepared in the West, to be extemporized now into new and better form! *Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?*

Our good Western brethren have reason to be thankful, that the farce was not allowed to play itself out to this ridiculous

length. Some of them, no doubt, are already ashamed of what they tried to do at Dayton, and pleased with their own defeat; and it will not be strange at all, if before the meeting of the next General Synod in Philadelphia, the cause of the Liturgy shall be found to be quite as strong in the West, as it has now shown itself to be in the East.

In the circumstances which have been described, it was a great victory that was wrought in favor of this cause at Dayton; far beyond all it might appear to be to superficial observation. The friends of the Liturgy knew then, and know now, that the vote in its favor meant a great deal more than the difference simply of the yeas and nays recorded in it; and the enemies of the Liturgy know the same thing. The true significance of the vote lies in the fact, that it was a struggle of the East to save its own cause here, against a faction which sought, by help of the West, to destroy it—a struggle, at the same time, which had to be maintained on Western ground. In this character, the stand made in favor of the Liturgy was powerfully felt in the West itself. There was a moral superiority gained by the argument in its behalf, which told upon the General Synod, and upon the outside community, with far wider and deeper effect than any counting of votes; which has been working for good since, and which will continue to work for good still through a long time to come. But more important than all this, was the way the conflict served to bring out the thought and feeling of the Eastern Synod in regard to the great interest which was here at stake, and to show clearly where it stood, and intended to stand, on the issue which had been raised concerning it. The only vote that could be considered of material account in the case was the vote of the East, including the Westmoreland Classis. It was properly an Eastern question that was to be decided. The voice of the West in regard to it meant nothing; because it was uttered, to a large extent, in profound ignorance of the subject, and under the power of blind, unreasoning prejudice. The Liturgy belonged properly to the Eastern Synod; was the child of the Eastern Synod; had its native home in the Eastern Synod; and by the judgment of the Eastern Synod was destined

finally to stand or fall. In this view, as all may easily see, the vote of the Eastern delegation at Dayton was an overwhelming decision in its favor. What an extinguisher on Dr. Bomberger's slanderous tract; the burden of which is throughout, that the Liturgical Committee had obstinately refused all along to do what the Synod wanted them to do, and had now finally, with this Revised Liturgy of theirs, capped the climax of their disobedience, in a way which the Synod could no longer possibly endure. We have seen before how the action of one Synod after another, on to the very last one at York, had given the lie practically to this monstrous imagination. But never was this done to greater purpose than by the Eastern vote in favor of the new Liturgy at Dayton. Had the entire Eastern delegation been at hand, the vote would have been a great deal stronger. As it was, we all know in how meagre a minority it left Dr. Bomberger and his colleagues. Two of these colleagues, besides, were the delegates from the Classis of North Carolina; which has been in a state of ecclesiastical secession from the Synod, ever since the present liturgical movement commenced; and whose representatives, therefore, allowed themselves, with very bad grace certainly, to be brought North at this time, for the purpose of meddling with it in any such factious way. Aside from these ciphers, the clerical vote on that side stood next thing to nothing. And it was little, if any thing better, with the lay vote. Our Eastern Eldership, after all the attempts which had been made to alarm their fears, and set them in array against their Ministers, went almost in a body in favor of the Liturgy. Shall we hear any thing more of a want of sympathy and good understanding between the Synod and its Committee, on this subject?

What has just been said, does not mean, of course, that the Revised Liturgy has been endorsed and ratified, in form, by what was done in its favor at Dayton. The vote there, we all know, was not intended to do any thing of that sort. The time for any thing of that sort had not yet come. The vote meant simply, that the Liturgy should have fair play; that, as a work of art, it should not be subjected to the vandalism of being

made so much raw material merely, for the manufacture of another work (not of art), in the hands of Messrs. Good, Rust, Bomberger & Co.; that the Eastern Synod should not be required to stultify itself, by abandoning both the work and the Committee that made it, to the tender mercies of a fanatical crusade, got up to lynch it out of existence, without judge or jury; that after having been brought, through long years of learned and laborious preparation, under the eye and ordering hand of the Synod, to the perfect working form it had now reached, it should not be kicked to the one side by the ignorant prejudice of such as knew nothing about it, but should have, at least, the opportunity of coming before the people, to be tried by them on its own merits. This is what the action, at Dayton, meant; nothing more. But this, in the circumstances, was much. Nobly has it served to redeem the honor of the Eastern Synod, and to vindicate the good name of its grossly calumniated Liturgical Committee.

So much for the historical defence of the Liturgy. How far the work itself, in the form in which it is now before the public, may prove satisfactory to the Church, remains yet to be seen. The Committee, with its friends generally, are quite willing to leave the settlement of that question where it properly belongs, with the people. They have no wish to force it into use in a single congregation. It is not felt that the honor, either of the Committee or of the Synod, depends, in the case, on what may become of the book, finally, in this way. Our appointed service is done; done faithfully, and to the best of our ability. We have got out at last, what we believe to be a good Liturgy, in good working order; and room is now made for its being put to practical experiment among our churches. If they find it to be what they want, and are willing to make use of it, either in whole or in part, it will be well. If they find it otherwise, and do not choose to adopt it, that will be all well too; nobody will have any reason to complain; the thing will have taken its right course, and come to its conclusion in a fair and right way. That is all that is wanted or wished.

Neither let it be imagined, that we object at all to having the

Liturgy subjected to examination and criticism. If it cannot bear to have its merits fairly and honestly investigated in this way, it ought not to expect favor. What its friends complain of is, not that it should be put upon trial, but that it should be attempted to put it down without trial. Not that judgment should be exercised upon its merits, but that without any regard to its merits, it should be proposed to have it condemned and set aside on other grounds altogether. The Liturgy courts enlightened criticism; it deprecates only falling into the hands of ignorant prejudice or dishonest passion.

The way is now open to pass on to the consideration of its theological character.

PART II.

THEOLOGICAL VINDICATION OF THE NEW LITURGY.

The discussion on the Revised Liturgy, at the meeting of the late General Synod in Dayton, brought out clearly two things. It showed that the liturgical question, as it now has place among us in the Reformed Church, is in truth a doctrinal question of the deepest significance; and it showed also that as a doctrinal question it has to do, not with one or two points of theological opinion simply, but with theology in its universal view.

This accounts for the earnestness with which the Liturgy is opposed by those who have set themselves against it. To some it has no doubt appeared strange, that the book should have become an object of such strong jealousy and dislike. For by general confession now, we are a liturgical branch of the Church; we allow the propriety of prescribed forms of worship; we hold it part of our Reformed right to use them, or not to use them, as to our congregations severally may seem best. In conformity with this freedom, we have been willing to let liturgies take their course among us heretofore, with little or no attempt at anything like ecclesiastical supervision or restraint. Our ministers might use the old Palatinate Liturgy, or some irresponsible compilation handed down from the last century, or the Mayer Liturgy, or any other Liturgy they pleased; nobody felt called upon to interfere; all were willing to let ministers and people judge for themselves what sort of service might best answer their wants. But in the case of our new Liturgy, all this tolerant indifference has suddenly come

to an end. Even in its first imperfect form, as the Provisional Liturgy, the broad sanction of the Church, under which it appeared, was not sufficient to protect it from violent obloquy and assault. Pains were taken to create prejudice against it on all sides; it could not be introduced, it was said, among our people; and yet, strangely enough, its influence was deprecated with ominous apprehension, as likely to work mischief far and wide. As the Revised Liturgy, it is now relieved of its first defects, and brought into easy working form. But this has only drawn upon it more apprehensive jealousy, and more active opposition, than what it had to encounter before. Hence the onset made upon it at Dayton. That was the culmination of a movement, which looked to nothing less than the violent suppression of the new Order of Worship before it was fairly presented to the churches. The churches, it was still said, could never be brought to receive it; but it was held dangerous, now more than before, to give them the opportunity of deciding that point for themselves. Not only must the book not be formally allowed; it must be formally condemned and prohibited from use. The usual congregational liberty of the Reformed Church must here come to an end. For this Liturgy there could be no toleration. The opposition to it had grown virulent. It amounted to fanatical hatred.

To some, we say, all this may have seemed strange. But it is accounted for by the theological life of the new Order of Worship. Had the book been a mere pulpit Liturgy, a collection of dry forms for the use of the minister in the usual style of such mechanical helps, it would have called forth no such virulent opposition. But it was something altogether different from that. It carried with it the spirit and power of a true altar Liturgy; and in this character it was felt to involve, not simply a scheme of religious service, but a scheme also of religious thought and belief, materially at variance with preconceived opinion in certain quarters; the sense of which then became instinctively, where such opinion prevailed, a feeling of antagonism to the whole work. Thus at our late General Synod, the liturgical discussion proved to be, in fact, an earnest

theological discussion, the interest of which extended far beyond the particular denominational occasion that gave rise to it. It was remarkable, indeed, that the opponents of the new Liturgy seemed to lay comparatively little stress on the mere ritual points, to which at other times they have taken exception. The question of responses, for example, hardly came into the argument at all. Every other consideration was for the time swallowed up by the question of doctrine. And here, again, the special was evidently ruled by the general. It was not so much dissatisfaction with single doctrinal statements here and there in the Liturgy, as hostility rather to its whole doctrinal basis, that roused and led on the war for its destruction. The Liturgy represented one system of religious thought; the opposition to it represented another; the two constitutionally different, and mutually repellent. Hence the controversy.

On the floor of the Synod, this controversy was met by the friends of the Liturgy with overwhelming success. The charges brought against it were shown to be untenable and false. Its doctrinal orthodoxy was triumphantly sustained. In the nature of the case, at the same time, this defence rebounded into the form of an attack upon the orthodoxy of the opposite side. It was shown that the offence taken with the Liturgy resulted from want of sympathy with the true idea of the Gospel, as this is owned and set forth in the forms of the Liturgy; and that the party opposing it was itself, therefore, theologically unsound, as standing in the bosom of a system which, as far as it prevails, draws after it the rationalistic subversion of the Christian faith altogether. The real character of the system in this view, it may be added, cropped out actually, from time to time, in the speeches which were made from that side of the house; in a way that served, if not actually to horrify, at least very seriously to startle, the better sensibilities of many, who had been brought up to believe different things.

What we propose now, is to bring this momentous issue between the Liturgy and its enemies into wider public view.

Vast pains have been taken all along to disseminate doubts of its orthodoxy, and to create in this way a prejudice against it in the mind of the Church. Heretofore the way has not been open properly for meeting the loose, and always more or less indefinite charge. Now, however, the time seems to have come for laying aside all silence and reserve in regard to the subject. The theological character of the Liturgy has been challenged, in a style which makes it proper and necessary to confront the challenge. Our object in this article is immediately and primarily its defence; but all such defence, as we have just seen, is necessarily at the same time a polemical assault on the system of theological thinking, from which the challenge in question proceeds. Such is the nature of the issue here joined. If the opponents of the Liturgy are sound in their theological premises, the Liturgy of course must be considered theologically unsound; but if it should appear, that it is the Liturgy in fact which rests in sound premises, then we shall know with equal certainty, that the charge of unsoundness falls upon the other side. Our vindication in one direction, becomes thus, as a matter of course, crimination in another direction. We turn upon the theological enemies of the Liturgy their own charge. In the prosecution of our argument, we shall cause it to appear that they are themselves unevangelical, just where they call in question the evangelical character of the Liturgy. We shall be under the painful necessity of showing, that by their own concession, or in the way of unavoidable inference from their premises, they stand committed to views that are heretical in the worst sense of the term.

Let it be understood, however, that this accusation is not preferred against the adversaries of the Liturgy indiscriminately. We have limited the charge purposely to its *theological* enemies; that is, to those who, consciously or unconsciously, hate and oppose the system of theological belief, in whose bosom it stands, and from whose inspiration it draws its life and power. We would fain hope, that even among these there may be some, whose minds are not closed absolutely against

the truth, and who need only the help of some candid and dispassionate inquiry to be made sensible of the danger of following blindly the prejudices by which they are now led. Beyond the range of all such theological opposition, however, there is a large amount of disaffection felt toward the Liturgy at present, which rests upon other grounds altogether. It is the result of misrepresentations industriously circulated, of fears blindly awakened, of prejudices adroitly played upon by party address—all in profound ignorance, for the most part, of what the Liturgy actually is, and of what it proposes to do. With better information, much of this disaffection may be expected to disappear. The friends of the Liturgy, at all events, are very willing to have it put as widely as possible to this test. They only ask that it should be allowed to face all such popular prejudice on its own merits. Let the people have an opportunity to judge for themselves, whether it be suitable to their wants or not. We do not shrink from this tribunal, even in our present theological argument. On the contrary, we appeal to it without fear. It was said on the floor of Synod, indeed, by one who opposed the Liturgy, that its theology was of too deep a character to be intelligible to the people. As if the people, forsooth, could not find themselves properly in the Creed, the Te Deum, the Lord's Prayer, the Litany, the Ten Commandments, the Church Lessons and Collects, but only in the creations, extemporaneous or otherwise, let down upon them in the usual style from the modern pulpit. We have no such low opinion of the capacity of our laity. In the case before us, many of them at least have theological instincts, which are better and safer than all scholastic speculations; to say nothing of traditional beliefs, which no logic can set aside. To these instincts and beliefs we now make our confident appeal.

As already said, the doctrinal objections made to the Liturgy at particular points, refer themselves throughout to its general theology, the scheme or theory of Christianity, taken as a whole, in which its different parts are comprehended. A proper regard to order requires then, that we should direct our attention first to this general scheme. Only after the theology of

the Liturgy in such broad view has been vindicated, will the way be open for considering briefly the errors charged upon it in special instances.

What, now, is the reigning theology of the Liturgy? It is sometimes spoken of in this country as the Mercersburg Theology. But the system is far wider in fact than any such name; and no name of this sort besides can give us any true insight into its interior character and constitution. What we need here, is not a distinctive title for the theology in question, but a distinguishing apprehension of its nature. For our present purpose it may answer to characterize it descriptively, (without pretending to exhaust the subject), under a threefold view. In the first place, it is Christological, or more properly perhaps Christocentric; in the second place, it moves in the bosom of the Apostles' Creed; in the third place, it is Objective and Historical, involving thus the idea of the Church as a perennial article of faith. These three conceptions are closely intertwined; but they admit and deserve separate consideration.

CHRISTOCENTRIC THEOLOGY.

The term is sufficiently clear. It explains itself. We mean by it, of course, that the theology before us centres in Christ. He is not simply the author of its contents: these contents gather themselves up into Him ultimately as their root. As an object of faith and knowledge, and in the only form in which it can be regarded as having reality in the world, Christianity has been brought to pass through the mystery of the Incarnation, and stands perpetually in the presence and power of that fact. All its verities, all its doctries, all its promises, all its life-giving forces, root themselves continually in the undying life of Him, who thus became man for us men and for our salvation. And such being the actual objective constitution of Christianity, it would seem to be at once plain that our apprehension of it, to be either right or safe, must move in the same order. It must plant itself boldly and broadly on the proposition, that Jesus Christ is the principle of Christianity, and that the full sense of the Gospel is to be reached only in and

through the revelation which is comprehended in His glorious Person. In doing this it will become necessarily such a theology, such a way of looking at the Christian salvation, as we are now trying to describe. Learned or unlearned, it will be a theology that revolves around Christ as a centre, and is irradiated at all points by the light that flows upon it from his presence.

For the right knowledge of things everywhere, all depends on their being surveyed from the right point of view. Facts and forms are not enough; they must be apprehended in their true relations; and this requires that the beholder should occupy, in regard to them, such a centre of observation as may enable him to see them in this way. Even an outward landscape, to be seen to advantage, must be seen from the proper position. So as regards any field or range of science. The astronomy of the old world, for example, abounded in observation and study; was furnished with vast material of phenomena and facts; accomplished much in the way of scientific comparison, induction, and generalization. But it labored throughout with embarrassment and confusion, because its scheme of the heavens was projected from a wrong standpoint. It made the earth to be the centre of the system to which it belongs, and studied the motions of the heavenly bodies exclusively from this false assumption. It was geocentric, as we say, in its contemplations, and therefore every where at fault. The Copernican system, in the fulness of time, redeemed the science, and made room for its modern triumphs; not primarily by the revelation of new facts, but by finding the true centre of observation for the apprehension of old facts. It planted its scientific lever in the sun, instead of the earth, bringing its studies thus into harmony with the objective order of the world it sought to understand and expound. Astronomy, in other words, ceased to be geocentric, and became heliocentric. Hence all its later enlargement and success.

Now what this heliocentric (sun-centre) standpoint is for the right study of the heavens in the science of astronomy, we affirm the Christocentric (Christ-centre) standpoint to be, for

the right study of heavenly and eternal things in the science of theology. No other standpoint can be substituted for it without boundless error and confusion. It is possible to bring in here a different centre of observation; nay, it is the natural vice of our fallen reason, that it tends continually to throw itself upon a different centre; for the full practical sense of what Christ is in this respect, belongs only to the world of faith, which as such is at the same time the world of what transcends all natural reason. We may have a simply anthropological divinity—a mere humanitarian theology; all centering in the idea of man (anthropocentric); the earth again ruling the heavens, and the merely moral or ethical, at best, playing itself off as the divine. Or we may have, on the other hand, a simply theological divinity—a construction of theology starting from the idea of God, considered absolutely and outside of Christ (theocentric); in which the relations of God to the world, then, will become pantheistic, fantastic, visionary, and unreal; and all religion will be made to resolve itself at last into metaphysical speculations or theosophic dreams. How far these false projections of Christian doctrine, in one view antagonistic, and yet in another everlastingly intermarried, have made themselves mischievously felt in the Christian world, through all Protean forms and shapes, from their first bad birth as Ebionism and Gnosticism, down to the Socinianism, Anabaptism, and metaphysical Calvinism of the sixteenth century, and down still farther to corresponding forms of religious thought in our own time—this is not the proper place to inquire. Our object is simply to fix attention on the possibility of such wrong constructions of Christianity, for the purpose of insisting with more effect on the necessity of a construction that shall start from the right point of observation; and to make fully apparent, moreover, how much is comprehended in what we say, when we affirm that this right point of observation is the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that no theology, therefore, can be either safe or sound, or truly Christian, which does not show itself to be in this view a truly Christocentric theology.

The proposition needs no proof. It is a first principle, a self-evident axiom, in Christianity. To doubt it, is to call Christ Himself into donbt. Has He not said: "I am the Light of the world"? Is it not His own voice that still rings through the ages from the isle of Patmos: "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last"? The natural world begins and ends in Him; for "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3); and again we are told, "by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). The ethical world, the movement of humanity, the world of history as it may be called, begins and ends in Him; it is not chaotic, the sport of blind chance or iron fate; Christ is in it, causing all its powers and forces to converge throughout to what shall be found to be at last the world's last sense in the finished work of redemption. Finally, the world of revelation begins and ends in Him; it is not a number of independent utterances, properly speaking, given forth from God, but a single economy or system, through which God has made Himself known among men, with progressive manifestation, in the way, not of doctrine primarily and immediately, but of act and deed; the entire movement having its principle or root in Christ from the first, centering at last in the historical fact of the Incarnation, and running its course thence onward to the hour of His second appearing, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. Jesus Christ is the alpha and omega of all these worlds (nature, history and grace), and as such the principle, centre and end, therefore, in which they all meet, and gather themselves together finally, as one (Eph. i. 10). This being so, where shall we find the key to a correct knowledge of the world, or of man, or of God, if not in that which is set before us as the first object of the Christian faith, the mysterious constitution of His blessed Person? Above all, what can we ex-

pect to know rightly in the sphere of revelation (among the facts of the Bible, and amid the "powers of the world to come" that are lodged in the Church), without the help of this key? The Old Testament throughout has no sure sense or force, except in the Christological view of its being a subordinate, relatively imperfect discipline or pedagogy, whereby the way was prepared for the coming of Christ in the flesh. It has no power to explain or interpret Christ, save only so far as it is itself made intelligible first in and through Christ. Then, as regards Christianity itself, strictly taken, what is it, we may well ask, in difference from all else pretending to call itself religion, if it be not the product and outgrowth of the new order of life, which first became actual in the world by the assumption of our human nature into union with the Divine Word (John i. 14, 17), having in this view its beginning, middle, and end in Christ, and in Christ only?

And how then, having such objective constitution, and standing thus actually and entirely in the historical being of Christ, beyond which it must necessarily resolve itself into nothing, as having no basis of faith whereon to rest; being in such sort bound to Christ, we repeat, as the alpha and omega, sum and substance of its whole existence, how possibly shall Christianity be studied and understood aright, either practically or doctrinally, either as a system of life, or as a system of theology, if it be not in the Christocentric way of which we are now speaking? To comprehend the "world which grace has made," we must take our position by faith in the great primordial centre, from which all has been evolved, and there fixing our spiritual telescope, endeavor, as best we may, to scan the wonders thus offered to our contemplation; being well assured that from any other centre, they will either not be seen at all, or else will be seen only under more or less distorted forms, and in more or less false relations and proportions. This centrality of Christ, in the Christian system, reaches forth to all parts of the system. Practically, all righteousness, all morality, all virtue, in the Christian sense, grow forth from the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." All sound Christian feeling and experience,

flow from the sense of Christ formed in us as the hope of glory. And so intellectually also, Christ is our wisdom, the principle of all true Christian illumination and knowledge. Through Him only we are made to know man, his original destination, and the full extent of his fall. Through Him only, we come to have an insight into the true nature of sin, the power of the devil, the meaning of death, the idea of redemption, and the progress of the Christian salvation out to the resurrection of the last day. Through Him only, do we ever come to the true understanding of God, "in the knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life."

The theology now under consideration is decidedly of this character. It revolves around Christ. It has been strangely enough charged at times with subordinating the idea of Christ to the idea of the Church. But this is a gross mistake, if not a perverse slander. The theology in question does, indeed, lay stress on the doctrine of the Church, as stress is laid on it also in the Apostles' Creed; but only as the Church is held to be the necessary consequence of Christ (following the Creed in this also), and never as putting the Church in Christ's place. No theology in the country certainly has made more of Christ as the centre of its thinking and teaching. No theology has insisted more earnestly on the great cardinal truths of the Trinity, the Eternal Generation, the Divinity of the Son, the Incarnation, the Mediatorial Work and Reign of Christ; and no theology, it may be safely asserted, has done more, within the same time, to awaken and enforce attention to the practical significance of these truths in the American religious world.

This brings us to the consideration of what we have already named as its second distinguishing characteristic, namely; the fact, that it moves throughout in the bosom of the old Creeds, the original *regula fidei* of the Christian world.

RULED BY THE APOSTLES' CREED.

It is not necessary to waste time here on the half-learned criticisms, we hear made continually, in certain quarters, on the title and origin of this symbol. We know that it was not com-

posed strictly by the Apostles; that it took form gradually; that there were different Creeds in the first centuries; and that among these, the formula used at Rome finally gained general credit in the fifth and sixth centuries, so as to become, for subsequent times, what is now denominated the Apostles' Creed. All this we know; but we know also, at the same time, that this final settlement upon the Roman form, involved no giving up or changing any where of a single point of faith; that the different Creeds previously, were only variations of one and the same confessional theme; that what was added to its utterance in any case, came in only as the explicit enunciation of what was included in it implicitly before; and that all in this way resolved itself into a common rule of faith, or canon of truth, which the universal Church held from the beginning as of Apostolic origin and Apostolic authority. In this character, the symbol has been received through all ages, by all branches of the Church, both Oriental and Occidental, as the primary and most fundamental expression of the Christian faith. Protestantism has claimed, from the beginning, to stand here on the same ground with Roman Catholicism. The Reformed Church, no less than the Lutheran, starts confessionally with the Apostles' Creed. Our own admirable Heidelberg Catechism, in particular, makes it, in form, the ground and rule of all it professes to teach in the way of faith.

The Apostles' Creed thus is the deepest, and for that reason most comprehensive of all Christian symbols. It lies at the foundation of all evangelical unity; it is the last basis and bond of comprehension in the conception of the Church. No sect refusing to stand on this basis, can have any right to claim footing in the Gospel, or fellowship with the Apostles.

All right theological thinking then, as well as all true evangelical believing, must start where this fundamental form of faith starts, and keep step with it at every point as far as it goes. The reason of this is plain. It lies in the constitution of the Creed; which is no summary of Christian doctrine primarily for the understanding, but the necessary form of the Gospel, as this is first apprehended by faith; a direct transcript,

we may say, of what the Gospel is to the contemplation of the believer, turned wholly upon the Person of Christ. Such faith is necessarily ruled by its object; the Creed, in other words, must be Christological, must unfold itself, first of all, in the order of what are to be regarded as the fundamental facts of Christianity, growing forth from the mystery of the Incarnation. In such view, there is no room to speak of two or more different methods of faith for taking in the sense of the Gospel. As there is but one method of the objective movement of the Gospel in Christ Himself, so can there be only one method for the apprehension of it on the part of believers. That method we have in the Apostles' Creed; and any attempt to set this aside, to substitute for it some different construction of first principles, or to subordinate its proper normative authority and signification to any later type of belief, must be looked upon at once as a serious falling away from the Gospel, and may be expected to result at last in the confusion and eclipse of faith altogether.

All this the theology before us owns and holds steadily in view. Starting in Christ, it follows the order in which the facts of religion unfold themselves with necessary connection from His Person. This order is for it not optional simply, but is felt to be inwardly bound to its own principle. It is the immanent logic of faith, determined by Him who is the central object of faith. It makes all the difference in the world in this view, whether a system of theological thought be cast in the type of doctrine that is set forth in the Creed, or constructed in some other way. To some it may seem comparatively indifferent, how the topics of religion are put together, if only the same topics nominally are made use of in the work; the form is of no account, they fancy; all depends upon the matter. But this imagination itself shows at once the wrong position of those who hold it, and is really nothing less than a vast theological blunder. The form here is in fact everything; the matter nothing, we may say, except as embraced in this form. It is a vain pretence, therefore, to say, that the authority of the Creed is sufficiently acknowledged, by allowing

it to be in substance a true, though defective, representation of the Gospel, and then going on to work up the material of it into some supposed better scheme of doctrine, projected from another standpoint altogether, and moving throughout in a totally different line of thought. No confession, no catechism, no preaching, no worship, no system of divinity, carried forward in this way, can ever breathe the spirit of the Creed, or have in it the true life of the Creed; however much it may try to make the world believe that it is at the bottom in harmony with the "undoubted articles of our Christian faith," as we have them set forth in this radical symbol.

Hence it is, that where such pretended reconstructions of the material of faith prevail, the honor shown to the Creed is in fact nominal only, and theoretic at best, and never practically real. We all know how completely the symbol has fallen out of use, in all those portions of the Church, in which such reconstructed divinity has come to have the upper hand. Evidence enough, what a difference it makes, whether our religion grow forth, or not, from this "form of sound words," delivered unto us from the Apostles. The difference reaches into all spheres of practical Christianity; into family religious training; into the Sunday-school; into the work of catechetical instruction; into the character of preaching; into all sanctuary services; into all devotional offices. In the same way it reaches to every point of doctrinal Christianity. There is not a Christian dogma, that is not affected by it in the most serious manner.

The theology of the Creed does not stop short, of course, with the few, primordial articles of that first, immediate panoramic vision of faith. Within the range of this regulative scheme, it finds room for any amount of scientific study and enlargement, through the use of what matter is offered to it for this end in God's Revelation, and in the exercise of a reason that is now purified for its office by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; the very element, as it were, of the world of faith in which the Gospel is here felt to move. But through all such enlargement, the organization of doctrine remains rooted and

grounded in the objective mystery of the new creation in Christ Jesus, as this has been first apprehended in the form of the Creed; and every doctrine is an outgrowth from this, having thus its position, complexion and quality in the system, both for faith and for knowledge, as it could not possibly have them in any other way. Every doctrine, in this way, becomes Christological, and serves to express a truth which is true only within the orbit of the Creed, and not at all on the outside of it.

It would be interesting to verify this in particular cases, by showing how the doctrine of the atonement, for example, the article of justification by faith, the idea of regeneration, the conception of sacramental grace, are found to be always something materially different in the theology of the Creed from what they are made to be in any other theology; but it would carry us too far for our present purpose, to pursue the subject in this way. We have said enough to show of what immense account the characteristic is, by which the theological system we are now defending is distinguished as being the theology of the Creed; and what a gulph of separation this necessarily involves, between it and all antagonistic theologies; which, however loud mouthed they may be in the use of cant evangelical shibboleths, stand convicted, nevertheless, of being profoundly unevangelical, just because they show themselves wanting in every sort of genuine sympathy and loyalty for the Apostles' Creed, through which the original voice of the Gospel has come sounding down upon us from the earliest times.

The theology we are defending may be said to be specially identified with the honor of the Apostles' Creed, in the religious history of this country. In our Reformed Zion, twenty-five years ago, the Creed had become almost a dead letter. It still kept its place in the Heidelberg Catechism; but that itself was in a fair way to have its life smothered out of it, by the incubus which had come to settle upon it in the form of Methodistic Puritanism; and for the fundamental significance of the gem it here held enshrined in its bosom, there appeared to be but small sense anywhere. The Creed was not heard commonly in our pulpits, and had fallen into neglect largely in our families.

Now, however, all is changed. The voice of the old symbol is once more restored. Our children are familiar with it. Along with the Lord's Prayer, it has forced itself into general liturgical use among us, even where the new Liturgy is still feared for the theological spirit that has wrought such auspicious change.

For can there be any doubt of the source from which this great change has sprung? Do we not owe it entirely to the Christological tendency, that has been at work among us for the last twenty years; which was so much assisted in its own development by the study of the Creed; and which at the same time wrought effectually to restore this to popular confidence and use?

And no one, who has observed attentively the course of things, can doubt, but that the power of this testimony has been felt, also, far beyond the narrow limits of our Reformed Church. There is a deplorable want of real sympathy still with this archetypal form of sound words, on all sides; but, a reactionary feeling has begun to set in evidently in its favor. It would be hard probably to find now, even in Puritan New England itself, any respectable so called Orthodox voice, prepared to say, as the pious "Puritan Recorder" could venture to do in 1849, that the Apostles' Creed has become, for the orthodoxy of New England, a "fossil relic of by gone ages"—a dead formulary. which "teaches in several respects anti-scriptural doctrines," so that it must be pitiful, therefore, to think of "infusing life into it, and setting it up again as a living ruler in the Church." A change, we say, has begun to come over the spirit of that dream; and our theology unquestionably has had something at least to do with bringing it about. No other theology in the country, certainly, has labored more to re-animate the symbol with its pristine life. No other has so borne it on high as the chosen banner of its faith. And we will add also in good trust, of no other is there more room to say, *In hoc signo vinces.*

OBJECTIVE AND HISTORICAL.

Starting in the great fact of the Incarnation, and following its movement, our theology has finally the third general character of being Objective and Historical. In other words, it is not a system simply of subjective notions, a metaphysical theory of God and religion born only of the human mind, a supposed apprehension of supernatural verities brought into the mind in the way of abstract thought; but it is the apprehension of the supernatural by faith under the form of an actual Divine manifestation in and through Christ, which, as such, rules and governs the power that perceives it, while it is felt also to be joined in its own order to the natural history of the world onward through all time. So much lies at once in the Apostles' Creed.

All revelation is primarily something that God does—an objective, supernatural manifestation, which causes His presence to be felt in the world. The right apprehension of what is thus exhibited, which can be only through the inspiration of His Spirit, becomes then the power of His word in the souls of those to whom it is addressed. Universally, it would seem, the inward illumination is bound to the outward manifestation in this way. God does not speak to the souls of men immediately and abruptly, as enthusiasts and fanatics fondly dream; that would be magic, and gives us the Pagan idea of religion, not the Christian. The order of all true supernatural teaching is, the objective first, and the subjective or experimental afterwards, as something brought to pass only by its means. Most of all, we may say, is this true of Christianity, the absolute end of all God's acts of revelation. Its whole significance is comprehended, first of all, in the Divine deed, whereby God manifested Himself in the flesh, through the mystery of the Incarnation. This objective act is itself the Gospel, in the profoundest sense of the term. In the very nature of the case, it must underlie and condition all that the Gospel can ever become for men, in the way of inward experience. True, it cannot save men without their being brought to experience its power; on which account it is, that we need to be placed in

communication with it through faith; but the power that saves is not, for this reason, in our experience or faith; it is wholly in the object with which our faith is concerned. The subjective here, sundered from the objective, can give us at best only a spurious evangelicalism, which will always be found, in the end, to be more nearly allied to the flesh than to God's Spirit.

Apprehended under such objective view, the revelation which God has been pleased to make of Himself through Jesus Christ (not in the way of oracle but of act), becomes necessarily, for our faith, at the same time historical. Only so can it be felt to be real, and not simply notional and visionary. Its objectivity itself implies, that it has entered permanently into the stream of the world's life, not just as the memory of a past wonder, but as the continued working of the power it carried with it in the beginning. The Gospel is supernatural; but it is the supernatural joined in a new order of existence to the natural; and this, it can be only in the form of history. In any other form, it becomes shadowy and unreal. Sense for the objective in Christianity, leads thus universally to sense for the historical; while those who make all of subjectivity are sure to be unhistorical.

The historical character of the Gospel, objectively considered, meets us, first of all, in the Person and Work of Christ Himself, as they are exhibited to us in the Creed. Its articles are not so many theological propositions loosely thrown together, but phases that mark the progress of what may be considered the dramatic development of His Mediatorial Life, out to its last consequence in the full salvation of His people. This, of itself, however, involves then, in the next place, as we may at once see, the historical character of Christianity also, regarded as the carrying out of this mystery of godliness among men to the end of time. Not only the subjective religious experiences and opinions of men here are to be regarded as entering into the general flow of history, like their political or scientific judgments, but the objective reality, from which Christianity springs, the new order of existence which was constituted for the world by the great fact of the Incarnation, must be allowed also to be historical. Only in such view can we possibly retain

our hold on the objectively supernatural, as it entered into the original constitution of the Gospel. It is not enough for this purpose, to have memories only of what was once such a real presence in the world. It lies in the very conception of the Gospel, in this objective view, that its supernatural economy should be of perennial force, that its resources and powers of salvation should be "once for all;" not in the sense of something concluded and left behind, as many seem to imagine, but in the sense of what, having once entered into the life of the world, has become so incorporated with it as to be part of its historical being to the end of time.

But this conception of a supernatural economy having place among men under an objective, historical form, an order of grace flowing from Christ, and altogether different from the order of nature, is nothing more nor less than the idea of the Holy Catholic Church as we have it in the Creed. We can see thus how it is, that this article holds the place assigned to it in that symbol. It is not there by accident or caprice. It is there as part of the faith, which is required to take in the objective, historical movement of the grace that is comprehended in our Lord Jesus Christ; and it meets us exactly at the right point, as setting forth the form and manner in which Christ, by the Holy Ghost, carries forward His work of salvation in the world. If we are to hold fast the objective, historical character of what this work was first, and still continues to be, in His own Person, it cannot be allowed to lose itself in the agency of the Spirit under a general view; it must, necessarily, involve for us the conception of a special sphere; this likewise objective and historical; within which only (and not in the world at large), the Holy Ghost of the Gospel is to be regarded as working. This is the Church. It comes in just here as a necessary postulate of the Christian faith. Standing in the bosom of the Creed, we cannot get round it. It is a mystery, like all the other articles of the symbol, which we are required to believe, because it flows with necessary derivation from the coming of Christ in the flesh. Our belief in it is not founded in our empirical knowledge of it, our having come to be sure of its ex-

istence and attributes in some other way. In that case it would not be faith at all in the sense of the Creed. What faith has to do with properly, here as elsewhere, is the supernatural belonging to its object; and that comes to us, not in the way of natural experience and observation, but only in the way of *a priori* challenge and demand addressed to us directly from its own sphere. We do not believe, as the old adage has it, because we understand, but we believe in order that we may understand. Where there is no faith of this sort in the Church, going before all inquiries in regard to what it is and where it is for outward view, it is not to be expected that these inquiries can be carried forward with much earnestness or effect. We may not be able to explain fully the meaning of our Saviour's descent to hades, or the time and manner of His second advent; but that is no reason why these articles should not be firm objects of our faith; we believe them, because they are felt to be involved in the objective movement of the Gospel itself in Christ's Person. And just so we believe the Church. We cannot get along without it, in our conception of the real, objective, historical working of Christ's Mediatorial Life in the world. This must, to be real at all, have a sphere of its own; which, as such, becomes, then, an order or constitution of grace, in distinction from the world in its simply natural constitution; exactly what we mean by the Church as an article of faith, back of all questions in regard to its outward organization and form. We cannot get along without it, we say, in the objective movement of the Creed. Do away with it, as modern spiritualists require, and this movement is, for our faith, brought suddenly to an end. It is either sublimated into magic, or precipitated at once into the order of mere nature.

The theology we are speaking of, then, is churchly. It believes in the Church, as we have the article in the Apostles' Creed; believes in it as a mystery, which comes in necessarily just where it stands in the Creed, as part of the ongoing movement of the general mystery of salvation, that starts in the Incarnation. It believes in an economy of grace, a sphere of supernatural powers and forces flowing from the historical fact of

Christ's birth, death, and glorification, which are themselves present in the world historically (not magically), in broad distinction from the economy of nature; and in the bosom of which only, not on the outside of it, the Gospel can be expected to work as the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. So far as this goes, of course, it owns and confesses that the Church is a medium of communication between Christ and His people. They must be in the order of His grace, in the sphere where this objective working of His grace is actually going forward, and not in the order of nature, where it is not going forward at all (but where Satan reigns and has his own way), if the work of redemption and sanctification is to be carried forward in them with full effect. In this sense, most assuredly, salvation is of the Church, and not of the world; and to look for it in the world, by private spiritualistic negotiations with God, professedly and purposely pouring contempt on the idea of all church intervention, is to look for it where it is not to be found.

This, of course, means a great deal; and draws after it, in the way of necessary consequence, much that we cannot now think of noticing in detail. A churchly theology can never run in the same direction with a theology that is unchurchly; and can never breathe the same spirit. Not because it makes less of Christ, as this last is ever ready to charge; but because it makes more of Christ, and cannot consent to have Him turned into a Gnostic phantom. Not because it is less evangelical, as the unchurchly spirit, with great self-complacency, is forever prompt to assume; but because it rests in a more profound and comprehensive apprehension of the Gospel.

Such a churchly theology, we feel at once, can never be otherwise than sacramental. Where the idea of the Church has come to make itself felt in the way now described, as involving the conjunction of the supernatural and the natural continuously in one and the same abiding economy of grace, its sacraments cannot possibly be regarded as outward signs only of what they represent. They become, for faith, seals also of the actual realities themselves, which they exhibit; mysteries, in which the visible and the invisible are bound together

by the power of the Holy Ghost (not physically or locally, as vain talkers will forever have it), in such sort, that the presence of the one is, in truth, the presence of the other.

In the end, also, unquestionably, the sacramental feeling here cannot fail to show itself a liturgical feeling. There is an inward connection between all the forms of religious thinking we have had thus far under consideration. They run into one another, and require one another to be in any sense, complete. A theology which is truly Christocentric, must follow the Creed, must be objective, must be historical; with this, must be churchly; and with this again, must be sacramental and liturgical. It must be liturgical, moreover, in a sense agreeing with these affinities throughout—the only sense, in fact, in which it is not absurd to talk of worship in this form. It can never be satisfied with anything less than an altar liturgy. A mere pulpit liturgy, a hand-book of forms for the exclusive use of the minister, must ever seem to it, in comparison, something very unrefreshing, not to say miserably cold and dry.

The enemies of the new Liturgy are right, then, in saying, that it is the product of the general scheme of theology we have now tried to characterize and describe, and that the spirit of this theology pervades, more or less, all its offices and forms. For this reason it is, in truth, that they dislike it, and would be glad to get it out of the way. Standing, as they do, in another order of religious thought altogether, they feel that the Liturgy is against them, and their instinct of self-preservation, as it were, impels them to seek its destruction. In this way, our liturgical controversy is, in reality, a great theological controversy; one that should be of interest to other Protestant Churches, no less than to our own. We see in it two general schemes of theology; two different versions, we may say, of the meaning of Christianity; two Gospels, in fact, arrayed against one another, with the feeling on both sides, that if one be true the other must necessarily be wrong and false. One of these schemes is the theology we have been thus far trying to describe; the other is the opposite of this, the Puritanic un-

churchly scheme, we may call it, in which the enemies of the Liturgy now openly stand.

ANTI-LITURGICAL THEOLOGY.

And what, now, is this Puritanic scheme? It admits within it different constructions, Calvinistic, Arminian, Methodist, Baptistic, and so on in all manner of sect forms; but what we are concerned with here is only its general character, the underlying common basis of these distinctions, as this presents itself to our view in broad contrast with the general character of the scheme we have just been considering. And even this general view must be taken at present in a very cursory, wholesale way. It will be sufficient, however, we trust, to show all unprejudiced persons, whose image and superscription the system in question bears, and in the service of what cause it works.

What, we ask again, is this Puritanic scheme, which finds a "serpent" in the new Liturgy, and sees in it only a poisoned chalice offered to the lips of the people? We will now answer.

It is a scheme, which betrays itself at once by its apostacy from the primitive *regula fidei* of the Christian Church, the Apostles' Creed. We know how it is ready at times, especially in our German Churches, to squirm under this charge, and how, like some slimy eel, it tries to slip from beneath it with every sort of disingenuous evasion. But we mean now to hold it tightly to the accusation; and to do this before the people (the elders especially and laity in general of the Reformed Church), so that all may be able to see and know just what this false popular evangelicalism means, and in what direction it leads. It is constitutionally and inwardly at war with the Creed. It cannot frame its mouth to pronounce the symbol in its true original sense; but claims the right of putting into its articles, where it may please, a better modern sense of its own.

Hear, on this point, the "Puritan Recorder," in 1849. The Puritans, it says, receive the Creed "in a sense consonant with their theology," either leaving out altogether, for example, the article of the descent to hades, or putting upon it a constrained meaning to suit themselves. "But it is neither safe nor expe-

dient," the Recorder honestly adds, "to receive such a document in such a perverted sense; for the document once being admitted, and its authority being made to bind the conscience, then the way is open for those who hold the errors held by its authors, to plead that we are bound to receive it in the sense which its authors gave to it, and this makes it an instrument of corrupting the faith of the Gospel." Honest confession! True divination! The voice of the Creed allowed to proclaim itself from week to week, without note or comment, in the churches of New England, would, in the course of a few years, we verily believe, sap the foundations of their existing orthodoxy, and turn the stream of their church life into a wholly new channel. But any such use of the Creed among them now would be cried down as a Romanizing tendency or a hankering after ritualism; as it would be also still, in spite of the little reactionary movement we see working here and there the other way, in all branches of American Presbyterianism. In these ecclesiastical regions, Puritanism has killed the Apostles' Creed out of all practical and theological use. It has become for them a dead letter, in family and school, in the pulpit and in the divinity hall. Let the thoughtful, everywhere, consider well what this means. We speak plainly, because the fact is plain.

In our Reformed Church, especially since the theological revival we have had among us these last years, no tongue would dare to wag itself against the Creed in the fashion of the "Puritan Recorder." With us now at least, the symbol is no dead letter, but a living witness of Apostolical truth. So our people are coming to regard it more and more. But the Puritanic spirit is still among us to a certain extent; and as far as it is so, it remains true still, in jesuitical disguise, to the outspoken confession of the Recorder, that the Creed can be mouthed by modern evangelicalism only in a galvanized, so-called non-natural sense.

Were we not told as much as this, to all intents and purposes, on the floor of the late General Synod, at Dayton? Was not the ground there taken by the enemies of the Liturgy, that we had nothing to do with the faith of the third and fourth

centuries, the birth-period of the Creed in its full development, as we now have it; that the faith of that time is not to be considered normative or regulative, in any sense, for the faith of the modern Christian world; that the only primitive faith we are to follow, is what we can get out of the Bible directly for ourselves (every man thus following his own nose), without regard at all to any such objective form of sound words as we find employed to set forth the fundamental belief of Christendom in the first ages? This, of course, was a blow struck at *all* confessionalism; bringing down our Reformed platform, at one stroke, to a flat level with the lowest forms of sectarian subjectivity, and involving us with general confusion in the brotherhood of Anabaptists, Socinians, Quakers, Muggletonians, United Brethren, Winebrennerians, Mormons (for these, too, prate of the Bible in the same Cambyses vein), and others, out to the end of the chapter. Hence, we had, in part, a change of base; the authority of the Creed insidiously assailed from the authority of the Heidelberg Catechism; the faith of the Primitive Church required to shape itself here into conformity with what was represented to be the faith of the sixteenth century. A modern confessionalism in this way made to rule out the sense of the older confessionalism, in which, nevertheless, it professed to have its own root and ground! Did we not hear this nonsense gravely held forth at Synod? Were we not told there, that we are to take the Creed only in the sense of the fathers of the sixteenth century, and not in the sense of the fathers who first used it in the second and third centuries, if this last sense should be found not to square exactly with the sixteenth-century sense, as it was quietly granted might be the case? On the supposition, in other words, of even a casual discrepancy anywhere between the Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism, it was held that the sense of the Catechism must rule, that is, literally coerce, the sense of the Creed; in such way, that the modern symbol shall be held to be of primary normative force, and the primitive œcumenical symbol of only secondary derivative force as taken up into its bosom. How superlatively absurd! What plainer proof could

we have of hostility to the Creed, than the cloven foot thus unceremoniously thrust upon our view? Cannot the people see it everywhere with their own eyes? The matter may be put into a nutshell. Either the Creed, in its original unsophisticated sense, is what the Universal Church in past ages held it to be, the one only true radix and ground type of Christian faith and doctrine; or else it is not this, but a bastard corruption of the Gospel, requiring to be tinkered into new sense at least, if not new form, before it can pass muster as fairly evangelical, in the modern party sense of this much-abused term. These are the two alternatives, without the possibility of any middle ground for even a rope-dancer to stand upon. Where *they* stand, whose acrobatic performances with the subject at Synod have just been noticed, needs no demonstration. They do not own the Creed, in its own proper historical sense, for the original, necessary, and radically sure norm of our Reformed faith; but take it only, in the way the "Puritan Recorder" took it in 1849, as being, "*most of it*, capable of a sense which harmonizes with the Scriptures," going on then to rectify it to their taste, by distilling into it their own fancies, or what they are pleased to consider the elixir of sound thinking drawn from some other quarter. That is, in plain English, the Creed is *not* for them the ultimate symbolical authority of the Reformed Church; and the fathers of the sixteenth century must be regarded as saying what was not true, when they pretended to look upon it in that light. These modern sons of theirs know better now, and have changed all that.

But what now have our people, as a body, to say to the issue, thus fairly made up and brought before them? Will they allow their first symbol, the marrow and kernel of their confessional faith, to be ruthlessly torn from their grasp by this Puritanic enemy, which has stolen in upon us while men slept, and now threatens to rob us of all that is fairest in our theology or church life? Are we to hold on to the Apostles' Creed with good faith, taking it in its own true sense; or shall we have in place of it only a dead corpse of the Creed, eviscerated of its own true sense, and hypocritically hold this up as an argument

of our fealty to the ancient symbol? Are these old primeval articles, this grand architectonic scheme of the everlasting Gospel, to be for us no longer of undoubted catholic or universal authority, as the whole is declared to be in the Heidelberg Catechism? Will the Reformed Church recognize the voice of her true teachers, in those who counsel, directly or indirectly, any such falling away from the faith of the fathers? The appeal is to the people. Let the people answer.

But we are not done yet with this anti-liturgical theology. Its opposition to the Creed shows, of course, a constitutional difference between it and the whole conception of the Gospel contained in this ancient symbol; and from what we have seen already of this, we need have no difficulty in apprehending wherein the difference consists, and to what it amounts. The difference lies just here, and we wish all to ponder and consider it well: The Gospel of the Creed is, throughout, Christological, concentrates itself in Christ, throws itself, in full, upon the Incarnation, and sees in the objective movement of this Mystery of Godliness, as St. Paul calls it, the whole process of grace and salvation on to the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting; while this other scheme, which we now call, for distinction's sake, the Gospel of Puritanism, substitutes for all this a construction of Christianity that is purely subjective, centering in the human mind, and that gives us then notions for facts, causing metaphysical abstractions to stand for the proper objects of faith, and thus resolves all religion finally into sheer spiritualism; in which no account is made of any objective mediation of grace outside of men, but every man is supposed to come directly, face to face, with God, having, in his evangelical notions simply, whatever is necessary to give him free access to the Divine presence.

The charge of not preaching Christ, we know, is one which this theology will be ready to resent on all sides, as the last that should be seriously preferred against it. It is accustomed to please itself with the imagination of being evangelical, for the very reason that it pretends to make everything of Christ and Him crucified, and in certain of its phases at least is for-

ever ringing changes on the themes of righteousness and free redemption through His name. Is not this the very boast of our unchurchly sects, all the land over, that *they* preach Christ, and Christianity, in opposition to such as lay stress on the idea of the Church, on the sacraments, on outward forms in any view; denouncing every intervention of this sort, as externalism, ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, ritualism, or something equally bad, that serves only to obscure the Saviour's glory, and to block up the way to His presence? Who in the world do preach Christ, it may be asked, if it be not these sects, for whom Christ is thus, nominally, all in all?

This we understand. It is an old song; as old as the Gnostics and the Phrygian Montanists, in the days of Tertullian. But we are not to be deceived by it for a moment. Try the spirits, says St. John; do not take them at their own word; try them whether they be of God. And he gives us a simple criterion for the purpose, applicable to all times (1 John iv: 1–3). They come preaching Christ of course. How else could they claim to be Christian? But what sort of a Christ is it that they preach? Is it the historical Christ of the Incarnation. Do they confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," not in appearance only, and not for a season only, but in full reality and for all time? Or is their confession of that spiritualistic sort, that resolves His coming in the flesh into a mere speculative dream, long since sublimated in the clouds? In this last case, St. John tells us, its boasting of Christ cannot save it. It is not of God, but is the very spirit of Anti-Christ, just because it sets up a Christ which is the creature of its own subjective thinking, over against and in place of the only true objective and historical Christ of the Gospel, "who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

We are not to be put off here with words. Neither can we mince matters in so momentous a case. We reiterate our charge. The theology we are dragging into the light does not preach Christ, as the alpha and omega of the new creation, the beginning, middle, and end of the Gospel. It cannot stand the searching test of St. John. The Christ it talks about is not

the Christ of the Incarnation, as He is made to pass before us in the sublime vision of the old Apostles' Creed; as we hear Him proclaimed (Jesus and the Resurrection and the Second Advent), by St. Peter and St. Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles; as we seem to see Him in the midst of the golden candlesticks, looking forth upon us serenely and grandly from the ecclesiastical literature of the first Christian ages. Not this, verily; as too many of us, alas, have been made painfully to feel; but another form and visage altogether; an object of thought rather than of faith, in looking to which we find that we have at last little more than our own thought to work with; and become like those that feed on wind, in trying to replenish our souls with spiritualities which our souls have themselves produced, instead of the true bread which cometh down from heaven and alone giveth life unto the world.

This is the great constitutional defect of the theology we are sitting in judgment upon; a defect which any jury of plain Christian men can understand; and it is easy to see, to what consequences, in the end, it must necessarily lead. Where the Gospel is not apprehended as the historical, enduring, objective Manifestation of God in the flesh, there can be no steady apprehension of that which constitutes the proper mystery of it in this view, namely, the union there is in it of the supernatural with the natural in an abiding, historical (not magical) form. This precisely is the true object of all evangelical faith, in the New Testament sense; the objective power of salvation, through the apprehension of which only, faith becomes justifying and saving faith. Instead of this, we shall have the supernatural resolved into a spiritualistic presence, seated in the Holy Ghost, and made to reach into the minds of men directly from heaven, in no organic conjunction whatever with the Incarnation; this being considered as, at best, the outward occasion only, and in no sense the inward medium, of the communication. In which case again, what is called justifying faith is no longer tied to the objective Gospel (without which, however, it cannot be *faith* at all), but hugs simply the Gospel of this subjective assurance a man may have of God's mercy in

his own mind, becoming thus, in fact, justification by fancy or feeling. But with the real supernatural of the Gospel metamorphosed in this way into the general notion of the supernatural in a metaphysical view, the whole conception of Christianity, in fact, sinks into the order of nature. The sense of what it is as a continuous constitution of grace, the historical presence of new heavenly powers, through the Spirit in the world, is gone. As with the Gnostics of old, the spiritual has lost all concrete, objective union with the natural. The bond between them has thinned itself into airy speculation. The system has become, in one word, essentially rationalistic. The virus of unbelief is in its veins; and it has no longer power to understand or appreciate fully, at a single point, the Mystery of Godliness, as it was seen of angels, preached to the nations, and believed on in the world, at the beginning.

Hence, the trouble this unhistorical Christianity has everywhere, with whatever comes before it as an assertion of objective grace in the institutions of the Gospel. What is exhibited as thus transcending the order of life in its natural character, is set down at once for superstition. It is, of course, then, unchurchly. A Church in the sense of the Creed—the organ through which Christ works in the world (His body), the medium of His presence among men, the home of His Spirit, the sphere of His grace—is for it no object of faith whatever, but an object rather of instinctive abhorrence and scorn. The office of the ministry flows in its view, not really, but only metaphorically, from Christ's Ascension Gift (Eph. iv: 8–12). Ordination is no investiture with a supernatural commission, proceeding from the Holy Ghost. Apostolical succession, in the case, is an idle dream. Sacraments, as such, are held to be a Romanizing abomination. For the spirit in question, the sacramental in truth, wherever it comes in its way, is a very Ithuriel's spear, the bare touch of which is enough to start it into its real shape, and make it appear the low rationalistic spirit which it is in fact. Sacraments are for it signs only of grace absent, and in no proper sense seals of grace present.

That such a theology as this should have no sympathy with

the true idea of worship in its liturgical form, results, as all can see, from its very constitution; and that it should be found arrayed now against our new Liturgy, is nothing more than what was to be expected. The conflict in the case, as already said, is a conflict of theological systems; not a controversy about a few responses, and a few outward forms (as the ridiculous fuss made in certain quarters about *Ritualism* in the German Reformed Church might seem to imply), but a controversy about doctrines and articles of faith, that strikes far beyond the German Reformed Church into the life of the entire Evangelical Protestantism of this land.

So much for the subject in its general view. The two opposing schemes of divinity are before us in a contrasted form, which even plain people, it is trusted, may be able to understand; if not with full scientific insight always at every point, yet with the insight, at least, of sound theological feeling, which is something far better. It remains now to notice briefly the theological objections made to the Liturgy at certain particular points. They will be found to resolve themselves at once into the general issue, between the two systems which have been thus far compared; and with this in view, it will be very easy to see to what they amount.

PARTICULAR OBJECTIONS.

I. It has been objected at times to the *Ordination Service* (though we heard little of this at Dayton), that it makes too much of the derivation of the office of the Ministry, by historical succession from Christ, and goes too far especially in saying, as it does p. 220, that the gift and grace of the Holy Ghost are to be looked for through the laying on of hands, for the fulfilment of its heavenly commission.

But here the question at bottom is simply, whether the Church is to be regarded at all, or not, as an objective, historical, more than merely natural constitution, carrying in itself powers and functions for its own ends, which are peculiar to itself, and not to be found anywhere else. Is it after all only

like a Temperance Society or a Political Party? What business has it then among the faith mysteries of the Creed?

In the view of the Liturgy, the Church is an organization, as the Creed makes it to be, which is not simply human, but is, at the same time, also, superhuman, in virtue of its organic outflow from the fountain head of all grace and truth in the world, the union of the divine and human in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the mystery of the Incarnation. The organization being such, must not its organs and functions be of a corresponding character? Is the Liturgy wrong in declaring the office of the ministry to be "of divine origin, and of truly supernatural character and force, flowing directly from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the fruit of His resurrection and triumphant ascension into heaven?" Is not this precisely what St. Paul teaches us, in the notable fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians? May the office come to any one, then, except from Christ, and through the order He has Himself established for handing it down in the Church? "The solemnity of ordination, then, through which this transmission flows," we are justified surely in saying with the Liturgy, "is not merely an impressive ceremony, by which the right of such as are called of God to the ministry, is owned and confessed by the Church; but it is to be considered rather as their actual investiture with the very power of the office itself, the sacramental seal of their heavenly commission, and a symbolical assurance from on high, that their consecration to the service of Christ is accepted, and that the Holy Ghost will most certainly be with them in the faithful discharge of their official duties."

Do we doubt this? Does it come as a strange, mystical, dangerously hierarchical doctrine to our ears? Then must we question, to the same extent, the reality of any such order of grace in the world, as we profess to believe every time we repeat the Creed. Ordination is a mere sham, indeed, if it be not the conveyance of power and right to exercise functions appertaining to the realm or jurisdiction in which it has place, as really as the commission of the civil magistrate is for him

an investiture with qualification he would not otherwise possess, to act in the name of the government he represents. The commission in either case must have quality and force answerable to the order of authority it proceeds from; and this being more than simply human and terrestrial in the case of the Gospel, it follows that the commission here must carry with it corresponding celestial character. Such being the case, it is only part of the faith which properly belongs to the transaction, when ordination is held to be the channel of supernatural official endowment for the work of the ministry; and nothing can be more proper than that the candidate, having made good confession of his general faith previously, should have the question put to him finally: "Are you truly persuaded in your heart, that you are called of God to the office of the holy ministry, and do you desire and expect to receive, through the laying on of our hands, the gift and grace of the Holy Ghost, which shall enable you to fulfil this heavenly commission and trust?"

It goes hard with the spiritualistic system, we know, to admit anything that looks to the real presence of the supernatural in this matter of fact way. The idea of grace tied to any outward occasion as such, the Holy Ghost bound to ordinances, is for it something heterogeneous with its ordinary conception of religion as an affair of purely subjective experience. It is felt to smack of mummery and superstition. Here, especially, comes in the bugbear of priestly manipulation and tactual succession, so easy to be sneered at by the frivolous. But what mummery must it not be, in fact, to go through a form of this sort, without any belief in the reality of what it pretends to be? To insist, that, while it seems to mean much, it means in truth in itself just nothing, and is only the sign of something altogether out of and beyond itself? If ordination be more than the powwowing of Pagan superstition, it *must* involve a real clothing with office in Christ's kingdom; and this can come only from Himself through the Holy Ghost. Does the candidate believe that, and look for it, in the transaction? Do those who lay hands on Him expect it, and mean it in their own

minds? If not, what business have they to be mocking high heaven with their dumb show in this way?

II. *Confession and Absolution.* Exception is taken to the form in the Liturgy, by which the minister is directed, after the General Confession, to assure such as are truly penitent, that their sins are pardoned for Christ's sake (p. 10). It breathes, we are told, an odor of sacerdotalism; and serves to break the direct, immediate relation that should hold in the case between the believer and his Lord.

Now, looking at the form itself, its terms certainly would seem to be safe enough in this view even for the most fastidious Puritanic judgment. For they only say, in fact, what any one may say, and what all are bound to believe, of God's grace toward the penitent through the Gospel. "Unto as many of you, beloved brethren," the form runs, "as truly repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with full purpose of new obedience,"—to such and no others—"I announce and declare, by the authority and in the name of Christ"—not by my own or any other authority—"that your sins are forgiven in heaven, according to His Gospel, through the perfect merit of Jesus Christ our Lord." Is there more in this at any time, than the declaration of what is at all times and in all places true? Does it imply that the minister himself pretends to forgive sins? Does it not, in the strongest manner, say just the opposite? What better is it then than spiritualistic prudery of the most captious sort, to put on a show of being scandalized with it in any such view?

But there is more in the matter than this. The offence taken is, after all, with what lies deeper than the form. It is the instinctive working as before of the unchurchly spirit, against what is felt to come in its way here as the mediation of Divine favor through the Church. God only can forgive sins, it says with the Pharisees of old; from Him only, therefore, can we have the blessing in a direct spiritual way—His spirit touching our spirit, without any intervening medium; to conceive of any such instrumentation of His grace *on the earth*, is blasphemy and superstition. In other words, this Gnostic,

rationalistic spirit eschews here, as at all other points, the mystery of an organic, objective, historical connection between the Church of Christ and the Holy Ghost; and refuses to acknowledge the Holy Ghost, the Divine in Christianity, unless in the form only of an intellectual abstraction, bound to the outward organization and order of the Church in no way whatever. Of the "forgiveness of sins," in the sense of the Creed, where it is made to be a mystery for faith holding only in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church, the spirit in question knows nothing. How should it? Have we not seen already that it is at war with the whole Creed?

The acts of the Church, we have good reason to say, in the exercise of her proper functions, and through her proper organs, are never just the same thing with what might be done by a mere civil corporation presuming to act in the same way. To think or say so, would, indeed, be to blaspheme the Gospel. As official acts, they have in their own sphere a real force, answering to the character of the sphere, and being in fact the form in which its powers reach forward to their proposed end. Who will deny this? No one, it might seem, but an infidel.

Shall we be afraid then to say, that the official act of the minister, the organ of the Church, in blessing the people, or in pronouncing to the penitent the pardon of their sins, means something more than the same declarations would mean, made by some one else in an unofficial and common way? The minister does not originate the pardon he pronounces; neither does the Church; but the voice of the Church, nevertheless, uttered by him and through him, there where he stands in the objective bosom of this grace, may be and is of immense account for bearing the sense of it with full comfort into the believer's heart. If there are any who cannot see this, sustained as it is by the known relation of thought and word universally, and by analogies to be met with everywhere in common life, they are to be pitied for the narrowness of their thinking, rather than argued with seriously in so plain a case.

III. We turn our attention next to the doctrine of the Liturgy in regard to *Baptism*. Exception is taken to it, as teach-

ing baptismal regeneration, substituting a mechanical ceremony for the righteousness of faith, and making a mere outward form to stand for the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us see how the matter really stands.

In somewhat bewildering contrast with this, the same service, which is thus charged with making too little of the sinner's justification, has been reproached for making a great deal too much of his original guilt and condemnation. Many at least, at the Synod at Dayton, could hardly trust their ears, when they heard a Professor of Theology, in the Reformed Church, say there, openly, that he, for his part, could not go with the Liturgy, where it speaks of deliverance of our children through baptism "from the power of the Devil;" he did not believe it to be so bad with the children of Christians naturally as that; it was enough to appeal to the common sensibilities of parents (mothers in particular), to prove the contrary! This sounds strange certainly; but it needs only a little reflection to perceive, that it is, after all, only the working out at a new point of the same false spiritualism, which finds it so hard to understand or acknowledge, on the other side, the presence of any real objective grace in baptism.

The Professor of Theology referred to taught in this case, of course, blank Pelagiansism. Here precisely lay the old theological quarrel between Pelagius and St. Augustine. Pelagius, appealing to the common sensibilities of human nature, would not allow that children are born into the world under the curse of original sin, which is the power of the Devil. St. Augustine maintained the contrary, and what is especially noticeable, confounded Pelagius most of all, by appealing to infant baptism, which could have no meaning, he said, except in the light of a deliverance from the curse of sin conceived of in this real way. So, we know, the Church, also, decided against the heresiarch and his followers; and the decision has been echoed by the orthodoxy of the Christian world, from that day down to the present. We content ourselves with quoting now simply the plain words of the Heidelberg Catechism, the symbol this Professor of Theology has bound himself as with the solemnity

of an oath to teach. "By the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise," the Catechism tells us, Question 7, "our nature became so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin." On this then follows the question: "But are we so far depraved, that we are wholly unapt to any good (*ganz und gar untüchtig zu einigem Guten*), and prone to all evil?" to which is thundered forth, as from Mount Sinai, the soul-shaking answer: "Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God." *How* this new birth by the Spirit is brought to pass, is not here of any account; what we have to do with now is simply the witness of the Catechism to the total depravity of infants. It is plain, direct, overwhelming.

And is not this what we are taught no less plainly in the New Testament? "That which is born of the flesh," our Saviour says to Nicodemus (John iii. 6.) "is flesh"—that is, mere human nature in its fallen character, which as such cannot enter the kingdom of God, but is hopelessly on the outside of that kingdom, and so under the power of the Devil; only "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" and for this reason it is, that a man must be born again, "born of water and the Spirit," in order that he may have part in this salvation. But why pursue the argument in this way? Must we go about proving at length for elders and deacons, or for the people at large, in the German Reformed Church, that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of Original Sin? The very children in our Sunday-schools have a sounder theology on this subject, than the Divinity Professor, who so exposed himself in regard to it at the Synod in Dayton.

A Pelagian anthropology leads over naturally to a spiritualistic construction of the whole Christian salvation; in which, as there is no organic power of the Devil or kingdom of darkness, for men to be delivered from, so there will be no organic redemption either, no objective, historical order of grace, in the bosom and through the power of which, this salvation is to go forward; but all will be made to resolve itself into workings of God's Spirit that are of a general character, and into

processes of thought and feeling, on the part of men, with no other basis than the relations of God to man in the most common, simply humanitarian view. Is there then no organic redemption needed for men, into the sphere of which they must come first of all, in order that they may have power to become personally righteous, and so be able to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, as knowing it to be God that worketh in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure? Has the Church been wrong in believing through all ages, that "we must be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. i. 13), not as the end of our personal goodness and piety, but the beginning of it, and the one necessary condition first of all, without which we can make no progress in goodness or piety whatever? Has the Church been wrong in believing, that such change of state, such transplantation from the kingdom of the Devil over into the kingdom of Christ, must in the nature of the case be a Divine act; and that as such a Divine act, it must be something more than any human thought or volition simply, stimulated into action by God's Spirit? Has the Church been wrong in believing, finally, that the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the sacrament of initiation into the Church, was instituted, not only to signify this truth in a general way, but to seal it as a present actuality for all who are willing to accept the boon thus offered to them in the transaction?

Baptismal regeneration! our evangelical spiritualists are at once ready to exclaim. But we will not allow ourselves to be put out of course in so solemn an argument, by any catchword of this sort addressed to popular prejudice. The Liturgy avoids the ambiguous phrase; and we will do so too; for the word regeneration is made to mean, sometimes one thing, and sometimes another, and it does not come in our way at all at present to discuss these meanings. We are only concerned, that no miserable logomachy of this sort shall be allowed to cheat us out of what the sacrament has been held to be in past ages; God's act, setting apart those who are the subjects of it to His service, and bringing them within the sphere of His grace in

order that they may be saved. We do not ask any one to call this regeneration; it may not suit at all his sense of the term; but we do most earnestly conjure all to hold fast to the thing, call it by what term they may. The question is simply, Doth baptism in any sense save us? That is, does it put us in the way of salvation? Has it anything to do at all with our deliverance from original sin, and our being set down in the new world of righteousness and grace, which has been brought to pass, in the midst of Satan's kingdom all around it, by our Lord Jesus Christ?

For the defence of the Liturgy it will be enough to place the matter now on the lowest ground. Our spiritualists admit that God *may* make baptism the channel of His grace—may cause the thing signified to go along with the outward sign, when He is pleased to do so; only they will not have it that His grace is in any way bound to the ordinance. Will they not admit then also, that the sacrament ought to be so used as to carry with it the benefit it represents; that God designed it to be in this way more than an empty form; and that it is the duty of all, therefore, to desire and expect through it what it thus, by Divine appointment, holds out to expectation? Who will be so bold as to say, in so many words, that baptism means no deliverance whatever from the power of sin, and that it is superstition to come looking for anything of this sort from it? Why then quarrel with the Liturgy for making earnest with the objective force of the sacrament in this view?

"You present this child here," it is said, "and do seek for him deliverance from the power of the Devil, the remission of sin, and the gift of a new and spiritual life by the Holy Ghost, through the Sacrament of Baptism, which Christ hath ordained for the communication of such great grace." Is it not true, that the sacrament has been ordained for that purpose, even if this be not exclusively or necessarily bound to its administration? If not, for what other purpose under heaven was it ordained? And if for this purpose, why should those who come to the ordinance, not come seeking what it holds out in this way to the view of faith? Are they to come seeking

nothing, expecting nothing, believing nothing? Or if otherwise, in the name of all common sense, tell us, O ye Gnostic dreamers, ye zealous contenders against formalities and forms, what then *are* they to seek?

The Liturgy, we allow, however, goes beyond this low view of the mere possibility of grace through the sacrament; it affirms that God, on His part, makes it to be always objectively just what it means. In other works, it teaches the reality of sacramental grace; and sees in it a birth-right title to all the blessings of the new covenant. This does not mean, that it regenerates or converts any one in the modern Methodistic sense of these terms; that it saves people by magic; or that it makes their final salvation sure in any way. Like Esau's birthright, it may be neglected, despised, parted with for a mess of pottage. But all this does not touch the question of its intrinsic value, in its own order; as being a real Divine gift and power of Sonship, nevertheless, in the family of God, for which all the treasures of the earth should be counted a poor and mean exchange.

On this subject of baptismal grace, then, we wlll enter into no compromise with the anti-liturgical theology we have now in hand. In seeking to make the Liturgy wrong, it has only shown itself wrong; and the more its errors are probed, the more are they found to be indeed, "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." Starting with Pelagianism on one side, it lands us swiftly in downright Rationalism on the other. "It is impossible," says the distinguished French Reformed divine, Pressensé, in a late article, "to establish the necessity of infant baptism, except upon the ground that baptism imparts a special grace." We are most decidedly of the same opinion; and for this reason we denounce this theology as in reality, whatever it may be in profession, hostile to infant baptism, and unfriendly, therefore, to the whole idea of educational religion as this has been based upon it in the Reformed Church from the beginning. Without the conception of baptismal grace going along with the baptism of infants, there can be no room properly for confirmation; and the catechetical training which

is employed to prepare the way for this, may easily come then to seem a hinderance rather than a help, to the true conversion of the young to God. Then it will be well, if baptism fall not into general contempt, and so be brought to sink finally more and more into neglect altogether. To what a pass things have already come in this respect throughout our country, by reason of the baptistic spirit which is among us, and the general theological tendency we are now considering, we will not now take time to decide. Those who have eyes to see, can see for themselves.

IV. Office for the *Holy Communion*. The central character of this service, ruling as it ought to do the whole Order of worship to which it belongs, must make it of course specially objectionable to the anti-liturgical spirit with which we are now dealing.

Particular fault has sometimes been found with the consecratory prayer in the service, as teaching a real union between Christ and the elements representing His body and blood, differing altogether from the proper Reformed doctrine on this mysterious subject. A certain Doctor of Divinity went so far at Dayton as to say, that it amounted in full to the Roman Catholic dogma of transubstantiation. But in this the Doctor of Divinity was egregiously mistaken, as in many things besides. The doctrine of the Liturgy in that prayer is not Popish, and not Lutheran, but strictly Reformed. Not to be sure Reformed in the modern Puritan sense, in which too plainly this unliturgical spirit finds its familiar home; but Reformed in the old Calvinistic sense, as this entered into the symbols of the Reformed Church generally in the sixteenth century.

It is not true that this proper Reformed doctrine made the Lord's Supper to be only a commemorative ordinance, calling to mind the fact of His death. It made it to be this; but it made it to be also the medium of a realmystical communion with this glorified life. It saw in it, not a sign only, but a sacrament; the conjunction of visible elements with the invisible represented by them, in such sort that the presence of the one could be said to involve the presence also of the other—not

locally of course, but dynamically and with full virtue and effect —through the wonder-working power of the Holy Ghost. This we have abundantly shown years ago in our tract against Dr. Hodge, entitled, "The Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper;" an argument, which no one has ever yet pretended to meet, and whose historical force at least never can be overthrown; however convenient it may be for Puritanic divinity to go on repeating its traditionary song on this subject, as though history had nothing do with the matter whatever.

Now it is this old Reformed doctrine, we affirm, and no other, which is involved in the consecratory prayer of the Liturgy. Any one at all familiar with the Calvinistic terminology in regard to it, can see that it is faithfully followed at every point. It would be hard, indeed, to give the doctrine more succinctly or exactly in the same compass. God is called upon to "send down the powerful benediction of His Holy Spirit" upon the elements, "that being set apart now from a common to a sacred and mystical use, they may exhibit and represent" —these being the very terms made use of by Calvin to distinguish the Reformed doctrine from the Lutheran; may *exhibit* and *represent* "to us with true effect"—that is, not corporeally, and yet not simply in sign or shadow either, but with the energy of actual presence—"the Body and Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ; so that in the use of them"—mark again the distinction; not in the elements themselves outwardly considered, but in the use of them, that is, in the sacramental transaction, "we may be made, through the power of the Holy Ghost"—again the Calvinistic or Reformed qualification— "to partake really and truly of His blessed life, whereby only we can be saved from death, and raised to immortality at the last day."

In the face of all this, what are we to think of a Doctor of Divinity, who could stand up and say, that the Liturgy in this prayer teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation?

What are we to think of the same Doctor of Divinity, when we find him thrumming on the expression, "this memorial of

the blessed sacrifice of Thy Son," in the next following prayer; as though it said *memorial sacrifice*, and meant all that is held offensive in the Roman Catholic so called sacrifice of the mass! Alas, alas, for the Liturgy, in the hands of theological criticism so utterly untheological as this!

A truce, however, to these quibbles about particular terms. The real controversy here is with the Communion service as a whole; and it turns upon the sacramental doctrine which underlies it throughout, and which in this way conditions the universal sense of the Liturgy. This anti-liturgical theology, not centering in the Incarnation, not dwelling in the bosom of the Creed, having no sense for objective historical Christianity, and no sense for the Church, can have at the same time of course no sense for the sacramental in its true form. For what is a sacrament? The visible exhibition of an invisible grace—a mystery in this view, where the visible and invisible are brought together, and held together, not simply in man's thought, but in God's power, by a bond holding beyond nature altogether in the supernatural order of grace. Does Puritanism believe this? Not at all. It will know no sacrament, save in the intelligible form of a sign, which simply represents and calls to mind what God does for men spiritually, and on the outside of the sacrament altogether. We have just seen what becomes of the Sacrament of Baptism in the hands of this spiritualistic scheme. And now it is only what might be expected, to find it bent on taking away our Lord from us after the same fashion, in the Holy Eucharist.

The Liturgy stands as a protest and defence against this sacrilege. It gives us the true Reformed view of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, in a form answering at the same time to the faith and worship of the Primitive Church. It teaches, that the Lord's Supper is more than an outward sign, and more than a mere calling to mind of our Saviour's death as something past and gone. It teaches, that the value of Christ's sacrifice never dies, but is perennially continued in the power of His life. It teaches, that the outward side of the sacrament is mystically bound by the Holy Ghost to its inward

invisible side; not fancifully, but really and truly; so that the undying power of Christ's life and sacrifice are there, in the transaction, for all who take part in it with faith. It teaches, that it is our duty to appropriate this grace, and to bring it before God (the "memorial of the blessed sacrifice of His Son"), as the only ground of our trust and confidence in His presence. All this the Liturgy teaches. Who will say that it wrongs, in doing so, the sacramental doctrine of the Reformed Church? Are we then to have no sacraments? Must we plunge into the full abyss of Rationalism?

We now stop. Our general task is done. Enough has been said, to show how things stand between the New Liturgy and its theological opposers. We are willing to submit the case to the common intelligence of our churches. Even the West must yet come, we think, to see eye to eye here with the East. To the people at large we say: Look now on this picture, and now on that; and judge ye for your own selves, which of these theological schemes may be safest and best for the German Reformed Church to take to her bosom at the present time.

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